Searching for the Origins of Mahāyāna and Moving toward a Better Understanding of Early Mahāyāna

by

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Aṣṭa	Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra
Aṣṭādaśa	Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra
Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit	*The Gilgit Manuscript of the Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā: Chapters 55 to 70 Corresponding to the 5th Abhisamaya*, ed. and trans. Edward Conze (Rome: Instituto per il Medio de Estremo Oriente, 1962).
	The Gilgit Manuscript of the Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā: Chapters 70 to 82 Corresponding to the 6th, 7th and 8th Abhisamayas, ed. and trans. Edward Conze (Rome: Instituto per il Medio de Estremo Oriente, 1974).
Aṣṭa-Wogihara	U. Wogihara, ed. *Abhisamayālaṁkār'ālokā Prajñāpāramitāvyākhyā: The Work of Haribhadra together with the Text Commented on* (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1932).
LSPW	*The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom with the Divisions of the Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, trans. Edward Conze (Berkely: University of California Press, 1975).
MDPL	Edward Conze, *Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1973).
P.	Pāli
Pañca	Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra
Pañca-Dutt	Nalinaksha Dutt, ed. *The Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Calcutta Oriental Series, no. 28 (London: Luzac & Co., 1934).
Pañca-Gilgit	Raghu Vira, Lokesh Chandra, and Edward Conze, eds. *Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts*, parts 3-5 (Facsimile edition), ed. Raghu Vira, Śata-Piṭaka Series, volume 10 (3-5) (New Delhi:

	International Academy of Indian Culture, 1966-70).
Pañca-Kimura	Takayasu Kimura, ed. *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā: II-III* (Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin Publishing, 1986).
	Takayasu Kimura, ed. *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā: IV* (Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin Publishing, 1990).
	Takayasu Kimura, ed. *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā: V* (Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin Publishing, 1992).
Pañca-Watanabe	Shōgo Watanabe, ed. "*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*: VI Anupūrvâbhisamayâdhikāraḥ," *Tōyō Daigakuin Kiyō*, no. 25, 1989, pp. 1-18.
	Shōgo Watanabe, ed. "*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*: VII Ekakṣaṇâbhisamayâdhikāraḥ (1)," *Tōyō Daigakuin Kiyō*, no. 27, 1991, pp. 1-20.
	Shōgo Watanabe, ed. "*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*: VII Ekakṣaṇâbhisamayâdhikāraḥ (2)," *Tōyō Daigakuin Kiyō*, no. 29, 1992, pp. 1-16.
PWETL	*The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary*, trans. Edward Conze, Wheel Series, no. 1 (Bolinas: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973).
PRgsg	The Prajñāpāramitā-Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā
Skt.	Sanskrit
T.	Taishō-shinshū-daizōkyō
T. 220(2)	The Second Meeting of the Great Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra (大般若波羅蜜多經・第二會), translated by Hsüan-tsang (玄奘) between the years 660 and 663, T. vol. 7, chüan 401-478, pp. 1-426.
T. 220(3)	The Third Meeting of the Great Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra (大般若波羅蜜多經・第三會), translated by Hsüan-tsang (玄奘) between the years 660 and 663, T. vol. 7, chüan 479-537, pp. 427-761.

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INTRODUCTION

卐 Problems in Searching for the Origins of Mahāyāna

> As regards the Mahayana we are still in the first stage of painfully gathering any material that may be at hand. Our picture of it is still that of the old nineteenth-century maps of Africa, with some coloured patches here and there at the edges, but with the vast interior left empty and white, filled only with conjecture and surmise. (Edward Conze, "Recent Progress in Buddhist Studies," 1967, p. 15.)

A review of recent scholarship on early Mahāyāna (great conveyance), especially on the origins of Mahāyāna, will highlight some of the methodological problems which have shaped the origin-discourse on Mahāyāna. This review then provides necessary background for the discussion of the three *yāna*s (conveyances; paths; vehicles), i.e., the conveyances of Śrāvakas (hearers; disciples), Pratyekabuddhas (solitary enlightened ones; those who become enlightened through insight into conditioned arising), and Buddhas (or Bodhisattvas). We still await a much needed thorough examination of all recent scholarship on the subject of the origins of Mahāyāna, what surely would amount to a bulky and intricate volume. Recent

scholars, such as Paul Harrison, Andrew Rawlinson and Tilmann Vetter,[1] have made significant contributions to this origin-discourse, yet leave some fundamental points unexamined. The present work has no intention of pursuing an exhaustive review of all scholarship on the origins of Mahāyāna, not because it is not worthwhile but because my primary concern is to lay the groundwork for understanding the dynamics of the three *yānas* as communicated by the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* (certainty of pursuing correctness on the Bodhisattva path; assurance of pursuing correctness as a Bodhisattva). By paying particular attention to problems of methodology in recent scholarship we pursue the possibility freeing ourselves from previously deficient understanding by constructing new approaches to the study of the three *yānas*.

"Mahāyāna" is a very general, if not to say vague, label. The term "origins," moreover, has been used inconsistently by many scholars in the origin-discourse. I will first consider the terminology of the "origins of Mahāyāna" and the epistemological roots for scholarly confusion between what one has found and what one was actually seeking. I will pay particular attention to methodological rigor in pursuing the origins of Mahāyāna and how present scholarly use of the terms "origins" and "Mahāyāna" measure up to these standards.

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1. Andrew Rawlinson, "The Problem of the Origin of the Mahayana," 1983; Tilmann Vetter, "On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Subsequent Introduction of *Prajñāpāramitā*," 1994; Paul Harrison, "Searching for the Origins of the Mahāyāna," 1995.

I will consider the notion of origin. Then, I will discuss various concerns regarding the delineation of Mahāyāna, especially its definition in contrast to "Hīnayāna" (small conveyance; lesser vehicle), the essentialist definition, and self-definition in individual documents. Consideration of the origins of Mahāyāna necessarily includes endeavoring to trace the oldest extant Mahāyāna documents back to their respective origins. I will also review scholars' theories on the geographical origins of Mahāyāna. There is a multiplicity of emblematic, visual, epigraphical, and scriptural Mahāyāna documents which we should consider to enrich this examination. However, we must carefully inquire into the relative applicability of different forms of Buddhist documents before we include them in the origin-discourse on Mahāyāna. This inquiry is a prerequisite for any pertinent discussion of the origins of Mahāyāna because not all forms of Buddhist documents are equally germane to the exploration of the origins of Mahāyāna. My goal here is not to provide answers so much as it is to question scholars' approaches and to prepare a better methodology for the exploration of the origins of Mahāyāna.

⚘ Bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma

Finally, I will analyze the multifaceted *yāna* doctrine of the sūtras of the *Prajñāpāramitā* (Perfection of Wisdom), especially the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (henceforth: *Pañca*), with special reference to the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. This term is

used at the leading edge of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature to mark the assured (*niyata*) Bodhisattva's initial transcendence of all the levels of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. Understanding this term, therefore, is crucial to understanding the issues concerning the three *yāna*s.

The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature is distinctive for the strength with which it affirms the comparative superiority of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* over all stages associated with Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, while validating the necessity for propounding the three *yāna*s. The relationships among different *yāna*s have been widely studied since the beginning years of contemporary Buddhology. However, little attention has been paid to the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. We cannot explain the relative lack of scholarly attention to this term by an absence of data, for it is a recurrent term throughout the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. Consideration of this term will open up a new panorama and also challenge our understanding of Indian Buddhism. Without taking this term into account any research on Buddhist *yāna*s is at best incomplete.

The term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* and other related terms provide a new perspective for understanding the concept and usage of *yāna* within the *prajñāpāramitā* tradition. My attention to this term stems from my study of the *Āgama/Nikāya* and *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras. The *Āgama* (source of the teachings) and *Nikāya* (corpus; collection of sūtras of the Pāli canon) are often regarded as integral texts of Śrāvakayāna, whereas the *Prajñāpāramitā*

literature, if viewed from its Chinese translations, is one of the earliest scriptures of Bodhisattvayāna or Prajñāpāramitā-Mahāyāna.[2] The *Prajñāpāramitā* is the major literature which establishes the relationships among different *yāna*s. While it places greater emphasis on Bodhisattvayāna, it does not consider all levels of Bodhisattvayāna superior to the two *yāna*s (*dvaya-yāna*; 二乘, denoting both Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna), nor do Bodhisattvas automatically have precedence over Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. *Bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* plays a crucial role in clarifying this point. Bodhisattvas, in terms of their realization, are not superior to the practitioners of the two *yāna*s until they enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. One of the chief focuses of the present work is the significance of the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* as key to understanding the complicated relationships among the *yāna*s. The clarification of this topic helps us further to understand what it means to proclaim the superiorty of "Bodhisattvas who have accomplished *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*" over Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas.

There are passages which one could cite as the negative attitude the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature maintains toward the goals of Arhatship (worthiness) and Pratyekabodhi (the enlightenment of Pratyekabuddhas).

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2. I use the term Prajñāpāramitā-Mahāyāna to differentiate the Mahāyāna of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature from the more general term Mahāyāna as seen in images, inscriptions, other Mahāyāna texts, and so forth; the latter might communicate different messages than those from the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

This work problematizes that view by considering the different expectations the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature places on adept practitioners of Bodhisattvayāna as opposed to prospective members of the Buddhist community in general. Careful discernment of the above-mentioned differences might revise our preconceived ideas about the so-called debasement of Arhatship and Pratyekabodhi. Moreover, the present work asks what the relationships of the Bodhisattvayāna to the two *yāna*s are. From the perspective of *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, Bodhisattvayāna is not outside the two *yāna*s, nor is it simply an outcome of a linear progression from the two *yāna*s. It steps up to higher levels of achievements and therefore transcends the two *yāna*s. This is one of the main reasons why a pertinent understanding of the *yāna*s becomes so significant in our exploration of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

The assumption that Bodhisattvayāna is superior to the two *yāna*s is inadequate and potentially a false basis for subsequent research. Knowing how and at what point the supremacy of Bodhisattvayāna was established is extremely important. The term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, with its abundant textual evidence, serves a useful purpose by shedding light on specific matters relating to the preeminence of Bodhisattvayāna. If modern Buddhology reexamines the texts with thorough scrutiny and care, we can evaluate and reformulate previous theories.

The present work emphasizes the central importance of the term

bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma for understanding various questions concerning Bodhisattvayāna's supremacy over the two *yānas*. However, one should not view this focus as an attempt to provide an all-embracing and exhaustive explanatory framework for every manifestation of Buddhist activities. On the contrary, the present work problematizes the very validity of such a goal. In the past many generalizations about the patterns of Buddhist *yānas*, especially the origins of Mahāyāna, have grown out of impressions from one type or one piece of evidence, later supplemented with other types of evidence and to help establish broader interpretative patterns. The fact that scholars cited a variety of evidence does not necessarily mean that they properly interpreted each source in its respective context. In some cases, documentary sources appear ripped out of context with the purpose of supporting the overall picture of the researchers' subject matter.

In considering various forms of available Buddhist documents, including doctrinal texts, historical records, travel accounts, inscriptions, emblems, images, and so forth, failing to recognize the relative incommensurability among these documents underestimates the complexity of general patterns of Buddhist *yānas*. These documents can be identified as "Buddhist," yet the label of Buddhist does not mean there is a basis of reference or comparison readily available (nor does it mean that there is not). We must carefully account for the various degrees of commonality we expect in respect to such things as ideas, goals, activities, and levels of advancement in cultivation. If

we find there is little commonality, we risk distortion should we apply patterns hypothesized and constructed from a certain form of documents to other forms of documents.

The following chapters will explore in greater depth previous methodology on the above-mentioned issues. I will begin with an examination of recent scholarship on Buddhist *yāna*s, especially on the origins of Mahāyāna.



Chapter One

"ORIGINS" AND THE "ORIGINS OF MAHĀYĀNA:" THE LIMITATIONS OF ENGAGING IN THE ORIGIN-DISCOURSE ON MAHĀYĀNA

A number of scholars have searched the origins of Mahāyāna with the hope that such an endeavor may clarify what forces shaped early Mahāyāna. Although many contemporary Buddhologists have employed the expression the "origins of Mahāyāna," few have sufficiently explored the meaning of the term "origins." The unquestioned assumptions behind this expression have nonetheless shaped our present day origin-discourse. The end result is a discourse that has unwittingly strayed from its intended purpose.

Similar to the above argument, Richard Gombrich ("How the Mahāyāna Began," 1990) has discussed origins of Mahāyāna through his theories on its early transmission. For example, he proposes "that the rise of the Mahāyāna is due to the use of writing. To put it more accurately: the early Mahāyāna texts owe their survival to the fact that they were written down" (p. 21). In

effect Gombrich equates origin with means of survival. It is still debatable whether the use of writing played such an important role in the survival of the early Mahāyāna texts as Gombrich asserted; evidence of oral transmission can easily be found within these texts, consistent with the fact that writing as well as oral transmission were common practices throughout India rather than Mahāyāna's exclusive privileges.[3] While the question of survival of early Mahāyāna remains an intriguing one, it is fundamentally different from the question of the origins, or beginnings, of Mahāyāna. In other words, the origins of Mahāyāna are not to be found within the factors by which Mahāyāna has survived.

To set the groundwork for a clear analysis of the contemporary origin-discourse I suggest we rigorously reevaluate our assumptions behind the term "origins." This term as used in contemporary discourse signifies changes of events over time. A study of the origins of Mahāyāna or the Buddha image, etc., should be oriented accordingly. What distinguishes the term "origins" from other chronological terms, such as change, transmission, evolution and development, is the implication that origin is the starting point after which all later changes occur. Origin is also the furthest extent conceivably possible for explanation of the changes in question.

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3. Andrew Rawlinson ("The Problem of the Origin of the Mahayana," 1983), for example, "mention[ed] the following vital points: the earliest Mahayana teachings were transmitted *orally, secretly* and probably *in small groups*" (p. 166). For related criticism of Gombrich's proposal, see also Tilmann Vetter, "On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Subsequent Introduction of *Prajñāpāramitā*," 1994, p. 1243.

It is important to treat the term "origins" in the expression the "origins of Mahāyāna" as nothing but origins. In this way we can evaluate the effectiveness of this term in the conceptualization of the origins of Mahāyāna. This approach understands origins as those points in time or in sequence from which both the idea of Mahāyāna and the many attributes of Mahāyāna are fundamentally and consecutively derived. An origin of Mahāyāna must be a fundamental point in a series of changes that occur over time. In other words, prior to this point of origin, there should not be any point in time or in sequence that develops into the idea of Mahāyāna or into any attribute of Mahāyāna. An origin of Mahāyāna must also be the point that consecutively develops into the idea of Mahāyāna or any attribute of it. If major interruptions occur, the relationship between what is known as Mahāyāna and what is speculated as the origins of Mahāyāna is no longer certain.

As for the expression the "origins of Mahāyāna," scholars most commonly use it to refer to two different things. First, this expression could be meant to refer to the first appearances of Mahāyāna in terms of time, locality, the very idea Mahāyāna itself, its advocating figures, etc. This interpretation may more aptly be called the "first appearances of Mahāyāna in Greater India." The conclusions based on this premise are inherently shaped by our available documentary sources. This body of evidence is extremely spotty; considerable documentation of Mahāyāna's first stages of existence in the public eye in Greater India continues to elude us. To be sure, Mahāyāna documents cannot

have appeared without any prior stage of origination or formation. From a historical point of view, Mahāyāna as a collective phenomenon cannot have its origin in Mahāyāna itself. I would suggest, therefore, that we adhere to the phrase the "first appearances of Mahāyāna in Greater India," and discard the usage that equates this phrase with the origins of Mahāyāna. A second implicit line of reasoning suggests that the "origins of Mahāyāna" precede our earliest evidence, and that the expression the "origins of Mahāyāna" be referred to Mahāyāna during its formative stages. Since the first appearances of Mahāyāna in Greater India are already wrapped in obscurity, a much thicker fog conceals Mahāyāna's formative stages. Conceptually the phrase the "formative stages" is not equivalent to nor a sufficient substitute for the term "origins." I suggest that the "formative stages of Mahāyāna in Greater India" should not be confused with the absolute furthest point back in time to which Mahāyāna extends.

It must be understood that the emphasis on "origin" as a fundamental point in a continuous or connected series of diachronic changes by no means exhausts the meaning of the term. However, this emphasis attempts to develop rigor in the origin-discourse. Admittedly, it is extremely perplexing to explore the historical origins of such a complex and enigmatic phenomenon as Mahāyāna. Even when we take the term "origins" carefully into account, we are faced with the reality that many of our documentary clues to the origins of Mahāyāna remain hidden, or lost, behind all traceable transmissions. On the

basis of the evidence presently available, we are unable to trace Mahāyāna uninterruptedly back to the furthest points, either in time or in sequence. Consequently, the term "origins" does not entail any documented referent as far as the expression the "origins of Mahāyāna" is concerned. This term is used, as it were, primarily as a mental construct which stems from the intellectual limit encountered in the very attempt to trace back to still earlier vestiges of a certain subject matter. It is tempting yet extremely problematic to equate either the first appearances of Mahāyāna in Greater India or the formative stages of Mahāyāna with the origins of Mahāyāna. Just because the origins of Mahāyāna are hard to get at, does not mean it is appropriate to substitute them with the first appearances or formative stages of Mahāyāna.

Analysis and clarification of the meaning of both the term "origins" and the expression the "origins of Mahāyāna" reinforce the importance of maintaining a specifically origin-oriented approach within the origin-discourse on Mahāyāna. Without clarifying what is meant by "origins of Mahāyāna," the academic inquiry into the topic is questionable and may even prove not to be origin-oriented at all.

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Chapter Two

THE DEFINITION OF MAHĀYĀNA AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF MAHĀYĀNA DOCUMENTS

An effective exploration of the origins of Mahāyāna requires an articulation of what Mahāyāna is and what Mahāyāna is not, together with an analysis of the term "origins." If this exploration has in the past strayed from its ideal, it is probably because researchers have neglected to explicitly articulate and analyze these building blocks, and have failed to demonstrate supporting evidence. We are left to question what Mahāyāna *is* and how we go about rediscovering it on the basis of the documents available to us. A comprehensive survey of both the connotations and denotations of the term "Mahāyāna" in all relevant documents is necessary.

Considerable attention has been devoted to summarizing the main features and trends of Mahāyāna. For example, Edward Conze (*A Short History of Buddhism*, 1993) summarizes the main doctrinal innovations of Mahāyāna under five headings: (1) a shift from the Arhat-ideal to the

Bodhisattva-ideal; (2) a new way of salvation, in which compassion ranks equal with wisdom, and which is marked by the gradual advance through the six perfections (*pāramitā*); (3) faith is given a new range by being provided with a new pantheon of deities, or rather of persons more than divine; (4) skill in means (*upāyakauśalya*); (5) a coherent ontological doctrine, dealing with such items as "Emptiness," "Suchness," etc. (pp. 43-49). Nalinaksha Dutt (*Buddhist Sects in India*, 1978) writes: "Generally speaking, Mahāyānism denotes: (i) the conception of Bodhisattva, (ii) the practice of Pāramitās, (iii) the development of Bodhicitta, (iv) the ten stages (*bhūmi*) of spiritual progress, (v) the goal of Buddhahood, (vi) the conception of Trikāya, and (vii) the conception of Dharmaśūnyatā or Dharmasamatā or Tathatā" (pp. 249-250). John Snelling (*The Buddhist Handbook*, 1991) summarizes the main trends of Mahāyāna as follows: the Bodhisattva ideal, the six perfections and the Bodhisattva path, compassion and skill in means, Buddhahood as transcendental principle, the *trikāya* doctrine, faith and devotion, a new role for the laity, new bearings in philosophy, two levels of truth, and identity of *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* (pp. 83-87). Since the many publications (cf. footnote 4) are familiar to most students of Buddhism, there is no need to quote them in their entirety. This chapter focuses on two problems within this discourse. One concerns the delineation of Mahāyāna in contrast with other traditions, and the other the essentialist definition of Mahāyāna. Finally, I will go on to discuss documentary diversity.

券 Avoiding both Essentialism and the Temptation to Define Mahāyāna by Contrasting it with Other Traditions

Scholars commonly characterize Mahāyāna by contrasting it with other traditions.[4] Few have questioned this predominant practice of delineating the main features of Mahāyāna in relation to those of Hīnayāna or, specifically, of Theravāda or Sarvāstivāda. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, for example, begins his 1918 article, "Mahāyāna," with the statement: "In order to define Mahāyāna, we must first notice certain characteristics of the Hīnayāna" (p. 330). Another example can be found from Hajime Nakamura's "Mahāyāna Buddhism," in which he says: "Mahāyāna Buddhism is characterized by a variety of doctrines, practices, and orientations that at once distinguish it from the Hīnayāna tradition" (1987, p. 217). The definition of Mahāyāna through a comparison with Hīnayāna has become so well established in modern academic circles that few scholars have questioned its legitimacy. If the individual documents were to be examined more closely, however, this strategy of Mahāyāna versus Hīnayāna might not prove as suitable as many

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4. cf. A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, 1967, pp. 273-279; Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, 1967, pp. 195-237; *A Short History of Buddhism*, 1993, pp. 43-49; Nalinaksha Dutt, *Buddhist Sects in India*, 1978, pp. 249-250; *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1978, pp. 80-82; Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, 1990, pp. 256-260; Yuichi Kajiyama, "Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Philosophy of Prajñā," 1979; Frederick L. Kumar, *The Philosophies of India: A New Approach*, 1991, pp. 145-150; Louis de La Vallée Poussin, "Mahāyāna," 1918, p. 331; Trevor Ling, *The Buddha*, 1973, pp. 199-205; Hajime Nakamura, "Mahāyāna Buddhism," 1987, pp. 217-222; John Snelling, *The Buddhist Handbook*, 1991, pp. 83-89; Joachim Wach, "Mahāyāna Buddhism," 1988; Heinrich Zimmer, "Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna," in his *Philosophies of India*, 1969, pp. 507-534.

people would think.

The comparison of Mahāyāna with other traditions is intricately interwoven with the construction of an essentialist definition of Mahāyāna. An essentialist view assumes that a labeling term, such as Mahāyāna, invariably contains some fundamental features applicable to all the phenomena that bear this very term. However, historical fluctuation, and geographical and documentary diversity create significant challenges to this essentialist approach. Paul Williams has gone so far as to call essentialism a "fallacy."[5]

Careful reading of individual documents indicates that the practice of defining Mahāyāna through a comparison with Hīnayāna demonstrates limitations. This practice overlooks both the complexities of individual documents and the disparities among Mahāyāna documents. The biggest challenge to this practice is evidence from the oldest extant Mahāyāna sūtras in which the term Hīnayāna can hardly be recognized as the counterpart of Mahāyāna. Instead, the term "two *yāna*s" (*dvaya-yāna*; 二乘), denoting both

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5. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1989, pp. 2-4. Surprisingly, while explaining what the "essentialist fallacy" means, Williams has recourse to his own essentialist perspective, for he writes: "the critique of the essentialist fallacy was always an integral part of Buddhist philosophy and spiritual practice, although not all Buddhist traditions went as far as the Madhyamaka in its application" (p. 3). Here an "essentialist fallacy" has apparently found its way in the expression "*always* an *integral part* of Buddhist philosophy and spiritual practice."

For a bibliography and general discussion of essentialism, or of its variant, with special reference to Buddhist studies, see Malcolm David Eckel, "The Ghost at the Table: On the Study of Buddhism and the Study of Religion," 1994; Stephen Prothero, "Henry Steel Olcott and 'Protestant Buddhism'," 1995.

Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna, is used. This tendency is demonstrated throughout various versions/recensions of the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures.[6] The *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (*T*. 224, vol. 8, 426b, the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra of the Practice of the Way; 道行般若經, a translation of the *Aṣṭa* by the Indo-Scythian Lokakṣema (支婁迦讖) in 179 C.E.) contains one reference to the derogatory designation "Hīnayāna." In the *Fang-kuang pan-jo ching* (*T*. 221, 放光般若經, a translation of the *Pañca* by Mokṣala (無羅叉：無叉羅) in 291 C.E.), there is not any reference to Hīnayāna. This designation occurs in Kumārajīva's tranlation of the *Aṣṭa* (*T*. 227, vol. 8, p. 578a-b, tr. in 408 C.E.) and Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Pañca* (*T*. 222, vol. 8, p. 198a, tr. in 286 C.E.). There is only one reference to Hīnayāna (*T*. 220(6), vol. 7, p. 935a) in the 600 fascicles of Hsüan-tsang's enormous translation of the *Great Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (大般若波羅蜜多經, *T*. 220, vols. 5-7, tr. from 660 to 663 C.E.). There is no indication that the term Hīnayāna has any significant place in the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures or that later translations of these scriptures invariably attach more weight to this term. Moreover, as Paul Harrison ("Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle?"

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6. The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature generally uses the phrase *dvaya-yāna* (the two conveyances) to refer to both Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna. For example, Pañca-Gilgit, vol. 10(5), f. 210b4 and Pañca-Kimura 1990, p. 188: *dvayor yānayoḥ śabdo*. *T*. 220(2), vol. 7, p. 278a: 二乘之名. LSPW, p. 420: "the words for the two vehicles." It must be noted that Ryukan Kimura's *Historical Study of the terms Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna and the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (1978) fails to recognize this characteristic which problematizes his excessive emphasis on the term Hīnayāna. He thus gives the reader a stereotypical dichotomy between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in his discussion of the origin of Mahāyāna.

1987) rightly observes, the term Hīnayāna "occurs only *four* times" (p. 80) in Lokakṣema's eleven Chinese translations. Edward Conze (*Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, 1959, p. 121) and Akira Hirakawa ("Daijō bukkyō no tokujitsu," 1981, p. 10) make similar observations and suggest that the term Hīnayāna was a later development in the history of Mahāyāna. There is no doubt that this term has a relatively noticeable place in several scriptures especially the *Lotus Sūtra* (its earliest extant version is Dharmarakṣa's Chinese translation done in 286 C.E.).

The term Hīnayāna is not found in the Pāli canon. No Buddhist sects have ever referred to themselves as Hīnayānists. In particular, modern Theravādins do not like being called Hīnayānists. Walpola Rahula makes this point when he writes:

> The terms Hīnayāna (Small Vehicle) and Mahāyāna (Great Vehicle) are not known to the Theravāda Pali literature. They are not found in the Pali Canon (*Tipiṭaka*) or in the Commentaries on the *Tipiṭaka*, not even in the Pali Chronicles of Ceylon, the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvaṃsa*. ("The Bodhisattva Ideal in Theravāda and Mahāyāna," 1978, p. 71.)

On the other hand, Mahāyāna scriptures do not refer to any Sectarian (*nikāya*) school known to us.[7] It is unclear whether Mahāyāna scriptures used such terms as Hīnayāna and Śrāvakayāna to denote the Sectarian schools. Edward Conze questions the validity of the view that Mahāyāna arose from

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7. For discussion of the question of what to call the Sectarian sects or schools (often misnamed elsewhere either Hīnayāna or Theravāda), see André Bareau, "Hīnayāna Buddhism," 1987, especially pp. 195-199; Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, 1990, pp. 105, 256-257; Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 1991, p. 9; Reginald A. Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India*, 1994, p. 10; Richard S. Cohen, "Discontended Categories: Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in Indian Buddhist History," 1995, pp. 7-8.

controversies with Theravāda (the teaching of the elders (of the order)):

> Some people surprise me by the amount of thought they expend on the problem of how the Mahayana derives from the Theravada. Theirs is a fruitless labour, since in fact the Mahayana did *not* derive from the Theravada which, in the words of Prof. Murti (p. 69), 'had little or no direct influence on the development of Buddhist schools in India'. ("Recent Progress in Buddhist Studies," 1967, p. 16.)

Akira Hirakawa challenges the theory that Mahāyāna derived from Mahāsāṃghika (great assembly) and goes even so far as to "deny any direct relation between sectarian Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism" (cf. Sasaki Shizuka, "A Study on the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism," 1997, pp. 80-81).

In sum, the dichotomy between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna in the discussion both of the definition of Mahāyāna and of the origins of Mahāyāna, a dichotomy that has dominated Buddhist studies in the past, rests on shaky ground. A study of early Mahāyāna does not have to begin with a comparison between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. Students of Buddhism today are increasingly aware of the extent to which "imaginative projection"[8] has led some writers to tip the scales so that personal or collective preferences outweigh the evidence. In some cases, imaginative projection of a dichotomy between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna completely overwhelms disciplined prudence. It may be that the great proliferation of this dichotomy, which occupies a place in virtually every introductory book on Buddhism, has

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8. Mary Tiles and Jim Tiles, *An Introduction to Historical Epistemology*, 1993, p. 191. See also David N. Gellner, "Monk, Householder, and Priest; What the Three Yānas Mean to Newar Buddhists," 1992; Susan L. Huntington, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look," 1992, pp. 144-145.

prevented many scholars from reexamining the appropriateness of its construction.

As noted, the oldest extant Mahāyāna sūtras for the most part do not demonstrate Hīnayāna as the counterpart of Mahāyāna, nor do they in any consistent manner define Mahāyāna through a comparison with Hīnayāna. I am not proposing that one should never compare Mahāyāna with the so-called Hīnayāna or with the Sectarian schools. Scholars throughout the history of Buddhism's expansion and especially in today's "global village" have and continue to raise questions of comparison among different *yāna*s, sects, schools or religions. The present goal is to caution against the imposition of projected frameworks of comparison that are not consistent with the integrity of individual documents. Methodologically, neither comparison nor contrast is a valid substitute for definition. Comparison, of the sort of de La Vallée Poussin, Nakamura, and many others, should not serve as a crucial part of the definition of Mahāyāna. Only when we are at least very well acquainted with the complete range of individual documents is it appropriate to draw tentative comparisons. One must exercise extreme care in comparing Mahāyāna with Hīnayāna, for this kind of comparison could easily lead to essentialized definitions of both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna.

Adopting an approach that focuses on individual documents does not liberate a scholar from biased views. But this approach helps to reduce the influence of overarching preconceived frameworks. An analysis of this kind

has much smaller risk of distorting the context of individual documents, and avoids artificially simplistic conclusions. Only from this perspective will our documentary evidence serve as a suitable reference point for further comparison. Documents deserve to be carefully studied for whatever themes they may contain. A methodologically acceptable framework of comparison of Mahāyāna to other spiritual traditions needs to suspend the imposition of any stereotypical framework of comparison, and to understand individual documents in their own contexts.

While sweeping essentialist constructions of Mahāyāna are among the gravest of intellectual sins, specific definitions and characterizations of Mahāyāna may be essential to individual Mahāyāna texts. These definitions of Mahāyāna may be independent of an essentialist fallacy or imposed comparison with other traditions. Our analysis attempts to avoid the shortcomings of essentialist constructions and imposed comparison in its discourse on the definition and characteristics of Mahāyāna by focusing on the individual documents in which Mahāyāna is defined or in which the characteristics of Mahāyāna are specified. For instance, the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras claim themselves to be Mahāyāna scriptures, define the term Mahāyāna, and also devote numerous pages to explicating the characteristics of Mahāyāna (e.g., *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, pp. 94a-110c; LSPW, pp. 182-188). Little attention has been paid to these sources by most writers. Paul Williams, for example, only points out the "essentialist fallacy" within many constructions

of Mahāyāna without taking advantage of individual documents to suggest possible alternative framings (see footnote 5 and his *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1989, pp. 2-4, 37-54).

In the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras Mahāyāna is characterized as the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva's path leading to enlightenment (*bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya bodhimārga* (Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1974, p. 91); 菩薩大菩提道 (*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 406a)). As a *yāna*, Mahāyāna goes forth from what belongs to the triple world; where the utmost right and perfect enlightenment is, there Mahāyāna comes to a stand (*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 88c; Pañca-Gilgit, vol. 10(5), f. 97b3-97b4; Pañca-Dutt, p. 225; LSPW, p. 179). The *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras elaborate on the greatness of Mahāyāna. For example, we read:

> *Subhuti*: The great vehicle is called a "great vehicle." Surpassing the world with its gods, men, and Asuras, that vehicle will go forth. That is why it is called a "great vehicle." It is like space. As in space, so in this vehicle there is room for countless beings. In this way is this the "great vehicle" of the Bodhisattvas, the great beings. Just as one can see no coming, going or abiding of space, so one cannot get at the coming, going or abiding of this great vehicle. Just as one cannot get at the beginning of space, or its end, or its middle, on account of the sameness of the three periods of time, so also with this great vehicle. That is why one speaks of a "great vehicle."
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> *The Lord*: So it is, Subhuti. This great vehicle of the Bodhisattva, the great being, consists in the six perfections, in all Dharani-doors, all concentration-doors, the 20 kinds of emptiness, the applications of mindfulness, etc. *to*: the eighteen special Buddhadharmas. (LSPW, p. 182. Cf. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 94.)

The greatness of Mahāyāna lies in two major areas: its practices which include not only those of the two *yāna*s but also those characteristic of the *bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya bodhimārga* (cf. footnotes 138-140); and its achievement as a result of its practices.

The challenge for scholars is to appropriately sort through and weigh the many potentially differing definitions and characterizations of Mahāyāna. It is not only possible, but worthwhile, to employ the doctrinal perspective within individual documents to define the term Mahāyāna and to articulate its primary characteristics. The related passages of these documents should make up some of the primary building blocks for the analysis of the definition and characteristics of Mahāyāna. However, this analysis should never go so far as to generalize about essential criterion for the definition and identification of Mahāyāna simply based on how the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, among other documents, defines the term Mahāyāna and articulates the characteristics of Mahāyāna. In view of the historical fluctuation, and geographical and documentary diversity of Indian Buddhism, it is untenable to use limited documentary sources to generalize about Mahāyāna as a whole.

卌 Documentary Diversity

Documentary sources of the definition and characteristics of Mahāyāna are very diverse. I am defining doctrinal texts, historical records, travel accounts, inscriptions, emblems, images, etc. as "documents" for the purpose of this research. While "Buddhist documents" all appear in one way or another to be "Buddhist," they may express very different aspects of this broad tradition.[9]

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9. I am, of course, aware that it is not always easy to identify a given document or

Documents of the same form, but especially those of a different form, share differing levels of commonality concerning ideas, goals, activities, and levels of advancement in cultivation. The fewer the areas of commonality the higher the risk that distortion will result from imposing on one form of documents the patterns construed from another.

In addition to the problems surrounding commonality among different forms of documents, another issue facing scholars is the way in which they view each form of document. Gregory Schopen has written extensively to challenge privileging literary documents over epigraphical documents in historical studies of Indian Buddhism. He suggests that "this [inscriptional] material tells us not what some literate, educated Indian Buddhist wrote, but what a fairly large number of practicing Buddhists actually did."[10] He goes on

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archaeological site as "Buddhist." See, for example, V. V. Mirashi, "Are the Caves at Dharasiva Buddhist or Jaina?" 1973. Hence, the term "Buddhist" is used here simply for the sake of convenience.

10. Gregory Schopen, "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism," 1985, p. 23. Also see his "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," 1991; "An Old Inscription from Amarāvatī and the Cult of the Local Monastic Dead in Indian Buddhist Monasteries," 1991, especially pp. 316-317.

Schopen's assertion appears to be on very fragile ground in view of two factors. First, he takes no notice of the important fact that "[e]arly Buddhist literature is an oral literature" (L. S. Cousins, "Pali Oral Literature," 1983, p. 1). It is doubtful, then, whether one can say that literary sources are "what some literate, educated Indian Buddhist wrote." Second, we know that many of those who were associated with epigraphical documents were "literate, educated Indian Buddhists," as Schopen also writes: "these donors are all called *trepiṭakas*, those 'who know the Three Piṭakas,' those who knew the whole of Buddhist sacred literature as it existed at the time" ("On Monks, Nuns and 'Vulgar' Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism," 1988-89, p. 159). This statement contradicts his following remarks: "There is, moreover, for the vast majority of such sites, no evidence that the canonical sources we know were known or used by the communities that lived there" ("An Old Inscription from Amarāvatī and the Cult of the Local Monastic Dead in Indian Buddhist Monasteries," 1991, p. 317); "Epigraphical evidence, at least, does not support the idea that Buddhist literature was widely known in actual Buddhist communities, but in fact points in the opposite direction" ("Archaeology and Protestant

to suggest a striking contrast between textual and epigraphical evidence: the former being "an ideal," "a normative and carefully contrived ideal paradigm," while the latter being "the actual," "an adequate historical reflection of the actual career of the typical Buddhist monk of the early centuries." (It is doubtful whether the epigraphical evidence should be regarded as representative of the typical Buddhist monk, for, in the early centuries when most people were poverty-stricken, very few could afford to have their names inscribed epigraphically. Those who did engage in epigraphical activities could also get involved in many non-epigraphical activities. Their actual careers included both areas of activities.)

I find frameworks that view textual sources as "ideal" and epigraphical sources as "actual" are not as useful tool for balancing out relevant points within documentary diversity. For a modern reader, ancient Buddhist documents, including inscriptions, are not themselves actions, activities, processes, or events, but more or less surviving accounts preserved in different conservation materials. In this sense, epigraphical sources do not reveal more actuality than textual sources do. On the other hand, Buddhist sūtras are filled with vivid descriptions of ascetic practices, mental and physical cultivation, stages, paths, etc. Textual sources actually convey much about practical experience, as might other forms of documents, and do not merely

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Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," 1991, p. 5). I think the Gilgit manuscripts as our evidence in this regard speak for themselves.

reflect ideals. As proper documents conveying religious messages, Buddhist documents in whatever form, depending on their respective contexts, could be "ideal" and/or "actual."

Schopen challenges the practice of privileging literary documents by reminding the reader of "the limitations of our literary sources."[11] However, he under-emphasizes the limitations of epigraphical sources. Of course every document, regardless of its form of material, has a limited scope of applicability. The contents of the Pāli canon are probably not the direct sources for exploring how the Buddhist religion was actually practiced, say, in Mathurā in the sixth century C.E. The extant epigraphical sources do not appear to have much immediate relevance in the study of such important themes as the five *skandhas*, *pratītya-samutpāda*, *samādhi*, *prajñāpāramitā*, and *ālaya-vijñāna*.

While truly comprehensive research should consult all potentially relevant documents, so too must it carefully study and account for the limitations of these documents' applicability to the definition and characteristics of Mahāyāna. I will discuss a little further on, many problems of the origin-discourse on Mahāyāna apparently result from taking little notice of the limitations of the documentary applicability. The central issue concerns a methodology that appropriately considers the definition and characteristics of

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11. Gregory Schopen, "An Old Inscription from Amarāvatī and the Cult of the Local Monastic Dead in Indian Buddhist Monasteries," 1991, p. 316.

Mahāyāna. This chapter proposes a methodology that focuses on evidence within individual documents which define Mahāyāna or specify its characteristics. Thus we form a solid foundation for further exploration of Mahāyāna.

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Chapter Three

AN EXAMPLE: PROTO-MAHĀYĀNA AS A PRODUCT OF SCHOLARS' FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING "ORIGINS" AND "MAHĀYĀNA"

卐 The Concept of Proto-Mahāyāna and its Construction of the Development of Mahāyāna

There are quite a few seemingly Mahāyāna documents, preserved in various forms of materials, which do not mention the term "Mahāyāna," nor do they define this term or expound on its characteristics. Some scholars have therefore introduced the label "proto-Mahāyāna." Hajime Nakamura, for example, was able to summarize: "Mr. Masao Shizutani, basing himself chiefly on epigraphical records and the dates of translation of Chinese versions, has made a proposal to make a distinction between proto-Mahāyāna, which did not claim the appelation [*sic*] of 'Mahāyāna', and early Mahāyāna."[12]

12. Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, 1987, p. 152. Similarly, see his "Mahayana Buddhism," 1987, p. 216. Cf. Masao Shizutani, *Shoki Daijō Bukkyō no Seiritsu Katei* (The Process of the Origination of Early Mahāyāna), 1974, pp. 9-50; 273-298.

The *Ajitasena Sūtra* does not seem to have any other extant version except for the one excavated in Gilgit, which is in the north of Pakistan. As K. R. Norman remarks: "The importance of the Gilgit manuscripts lies in the fact that they are the only Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts, except for the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, found in India proper, the remainder known to us coming from Nepal, Tibet or Central Asia."[13] The body of Gilgit manuscript of the *Ajitasena Sūtra* does not contain the term "Mahāyāna," but is designated as a "Mahāyāna sūtra" by its colophon, which, as with the Gilgit manuscripts, dates back to the 6th/7th century C.E.[14] At first sight an admixture of this scripture's *yāna* designation emerges. While explaining what he calls the "Mahāyāna before 'Mahāyāna'," Paul Williams writes: "The *Ajitasena Sūtra* describes itself as a Mahāyāna *sūtra*, although I suspect that this is another example of a *sūtra* which originally belonged to a pre-Mahāyāna tradition. . . . it seems to indicate a stage of proto-Mahāyāna, a stage of Mahāyāna prior to its own self-awareness as 'Mahāyāna', with all the concomitant senses of superiority and contrast with religious practices and beliefs deemed

13. K. R. Norman, "Review of Nalinaksha Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*," 1986, p. 64. See also Lewis R. Lancaster, "The Editing of Buddhist Texts," 1977; "Gilgit to Korea: The Search for the Sources of the Chinese Buddhist Canon," 1985. The most comprehensive listing of the studies of the Gilgit manuscripts can be found in Yao-ming Tsai, "Bibliography on the Gilgit Manuscripts," *Berkeley Buddhist Research Center Home Page* (http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~yaoming/biblio_gilgit_mss.html).

14. Nalinaksha Dutt (ed.), *Gilgit Manuscripts*, vol. I, 1939, p. 42. For a discussion of dating the Gilgit finds with special reference to the wooden book covers as well as the inscriptions, see Oskar v. Hinüber, "Buddhism in Gilgit Between India and Central Asia," 1988, especially pp. 40-41.

inferior."[15]

Williams regards the so-called proto-Mahāyāna as "a stage of Mahāyāna prior to its own self-awareness as 'Mahāyāna'." How, then, can a text like the *Ajitasena Sūtra* "describe itself as a Mahāyāna *sūtra*" without "its own self-awareness as 'Mahāyāna'?" Williams' arguments in this regard are supported by two lines of reasoning. One reasoning:

> what distinguishes it [the *Ajitasena Sūtra*] from most other early Mahāyāna *sūtras* is the lack of antagonism towards the Hearers, Arhatship, and the monastic tradition. . . . This *sūtra* shows clearly Mahāyāna tendencies, but is conceptually prior to the Mahāyāna's own self-awareness. As Mahāyāna, the Great Vehicle, there is always an immediate contrast with Hīnayāna, the Inferior Vehicle. But initially, as the so-called Mahāyāna began to emerge, there was no sense of opposition to the Hearers as such, only an opposition to those who denied the authority of the relevant *sūtra*." (1989, p. 28.)

It is not that the sūtra "described itself" as Mahāyāna as much as many of the described characteristics are common in "late" definition of Mahāyāna. The degree of antagonism toward the Hearers and Hīnayāna, assumed to increase with the self awareness of the Mahāyāna tradition, is the key by which Williams determines whether or not the sūtra was Mahāyāna. And why was there such an antagonistic trend? Because the *Ajitasena Sūtra* lacks this

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15. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1989, p. 26. For a summary of the *Ajitasena-vyākāraṇa-nirdeśa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra* (abbreviated as *Ajitasena Sūtra*), including a Devanagari edition of the Gilgit manuscript, see Nalinaksha Dutt (ed.), *Gilgit Manuscripts*, vol. I, 1939, pp. 73-90, 101-136. Concerning the *yāna* affiliation of this sūtra, Dutt writes: "This treatise is undoubtedly a Mahāyāna-sūtra but it represents the semi-Mahāyānic form of Buddhism" (ibid., p. 73). He also suggests that this sūtra belongs to "the stage of Buddhism in which Hīnayāna was just incorporating the Mahāyānic ideals without, however, its philosophy of *Dharmaśūnyatā*" (ibid., p. 74). For related discussion see Richard S. Cohen, "Discontended Categories: Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in Indian Buddhist History," 1995, pp. 4-6.

antagonism, it must have belonged to a stage of proto-Mahāyāna. As discussed in Chapter Two we cannot assume that a growing antagonism between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna is an essential dichotomy. Most extant historical, epigraphical, and textual evidence supports this challenge. It is also questionable whether or not there is sufficient evidence of any chronologically recognizable trend in the relationship between early Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna.

The other reasoning that Williams presents to justify his designation of the *Ajitasena Sūtra* to the proto-Mahāyāna stage is exactly the same as that of Shizutani and Nakamura: the term "Mahāyāna" does not occur in this sūtra, therefore this sūtra must have belonged to the stage of proto-Mahāyāna (see footnote 12). Because the term "Mahāyāna" is not referred to in this sūtra, and there is a lack of antagonism toward Hīnayāna, Williams goes even further to contend that this sūtra "shows clearly Mahāyāna tendencies, but is conceptually prior to the Mahāyāna's own self-awareness" (1989, pp. 26-28).

By implying "clearly Mahāyāna tendencies" Williams comes close to betraying his anti-essentialist argument (1989, pp. 2-4). He in effect determines to which stage the *Ajitasena Sūtra* belongs by mechanically assuming a correlation between the lack of the term "Mahāyāna" in a "Mahāyāna" sūtra and the stage of proto-Mahāyāna, "a stage of Mahāyāna prior to its own self-awareness as 'Mahāyāna'."

券 Classifying Seemingly Mahāyāna Documents

The historical development of the many seemingly Mahāyāna scriptures, such as the *Ajitasena Sūtra*, involves complicated factors which remain largely unexplored because of the obscurity of the origins of Mahāyāna and the puzzling transmission of the surviving documents in question. How can a 6th/7th century manuscript like the *Ajitasena Sūtra* with extremely obscure chronology behind it be identified as, in Williams' words (1989, p. 26), "another example of a *sūtra* which *originally* belonged to a *pre-Mahāyāna* tradition" (emphasis added)? The following discussion further explores the classification of seemingly Mahāyāna documents.

Some documents, especially the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, center around both the label and detailed features of Mahāyāna. Scholars should not assume that these characteristics are necessary for all Mahāyāna documents. Although the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures explicitly discuss Mahāyāna, such an expectation is not axiomatically applicable to the seemingly Mahāyāna documents, many of which, especially the epigraphical and visual ones, do not contain the term "Mahāyāna." Should we decide to base our interpretation of seemingly Mahāyāna documents on the definition and characteristics of Mahāyāna as explicated in the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, for example, we would likely find only very few examples that meet this criterion.[16] This

16. An example of this analytical strategy will be discussed in Chapter Seven

analytical strategy helps highlight the difficulties in identifying Mahāyāna documents. It challenges scholars to examine how they classify different types of Mahāyāna documents. Our task is to fundamentally rethink the contemporary methodologies that have shaped our knowledge both of the origins of Mahāyāna and of the so-called proto-Mahāyāna.

The issue of the definition and characteristics of Mahāyāna should not be taken as the exclusive domain of the documents which address these questions directly and with great detail. The uncertainty and variability of the seemingly Mahāyāna documents make the exploration of this issue very challenging. Let me add that the label "seemingly Mahāyāna," or "non-specifically Mahāyāna," is only used here for the sake of convenience, with the caution that the label itself lacks any factual reference or positive delineation. It is not so much that the expression "seemingly Mahāyāna" actually appears in the documents we now call "seemingly Mahāyāna" but rather this expression should be regarded as a theoretical instrument.

In such a setting of caution yet speculation, Buddhist documents can roughly be considered as "seemingly Mahāyāna" if they cannot be indisputably identified as Mahāyāna, but appear either to address certain issues which rarely, if ever, occur in the *Āgama/Nikāya* scriptures, or to expound on the issues also common to the *Āgama/Nikāya* scriptures but in a notably different or advanced manner. On the basis of the evidence presently

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concerning a comparison between the so-called "'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula" and the idea of merit transfer described in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

available we are unable to identify "seemingly Mahāyāna" documents as indisputably Mahāyāna, even though in some respects they bear the features similar to those of the indisputably Mahāyāna.

The occurrence of the label or the detailed features of Mahāyāna in the body of a document should, at best, be taken as a sufficient, instead of a necessary, condition for the document to be considered Mahāyāna. The practice of some scholars, such as Shizutani, Nakamura, and Williams, of basing their classification of Mahāyāna documents on the presence or absence of the self-conscious appellation "Mahāyāna" oversimplifies the complex issues behind their task and, at the same time, uses neither internal evidence in the documents in question nor external evidence from historical or other sources to validate their argument. I am not convinced that the utilization of the appellation "Mahāyāna" should be taken as a necessary condition, nor do I see any positive correlation between the non-existence of the appellation "Mahāyāna" and the stage of proto-Mahāyāna. We all know that a university student's diary or essay does not have to contain the word "university" in order to be classified as such. Why would it be otherwise in the case of Mahāyāna documents? Aside from the term "Mahāyāna" and its definition, Mahāyāna documents, as amply evidenced in the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, are also characterized by numerous other themes. It is rather unreasonable to expect all the Mahāyāna documents simply to include the term "Mahāyāna" or to focus on this term. Instead, one must look at each individual document

and judge it. It is quite possible and understandable that, especially as far as the "seemingly Mahāyāna" documents are concerned, the topic of Mahāyāna itself becomes rather insignificant or irrelevant, for other more specific themes are in the spotlight. It is then perfectly possible for a Mahāyāna document to be silent on the topic of Mahāyāna itself.

The non-existence of the appellation "Mahāyāna" in a document does not make it less Mahāyāna, nor does it indicate that it is deficient in its own self-awareness as Mahāyāna. Both the indisputably Mahāyāna and the seemingly Mahāyāna documents function in many ways, and they cannot be judged simply by whether they contain the appellation "Mahāyāna." The presence or absence of the self-conscious appellation "Mahāyāna" is an inappropriate indicator of objective change over time from the so-called proto-Mahāyāna to Mahāyāna.

The term "seemingly Mahāyāna" is a theoretical instrument which lacks any objective referent and therefore avoids the pitfall of suggesting or assuming change over time from the seemingly Mahāyāna to Mahāyāna. More importantly, this treatment allows us to move our perception from the realm of what "we" formulate to that of what "our documents" reveal about Mahāyāna. The point of this methodology is to reorient the study both of Mahāyāna and of the origins of Mahāyāna away from being confined to predominantely preconceived frameworks, such as the one consisting of the so-called proto-Mahāyāna, toward a comprehensive and open-ended survey of the

features of our documents on their own merits. It is important to probe some of the routes that scholars have taken to trace Mahāyāna documents back to their earlier stages. On this foundation we will base our own formulations of early Mahāyāna. To lay the groundwork for this pursuit the following chapters will individually discuss the three primary sources of scholarly inquiry, namely: the oldest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna scriptures, the extant Indian "Mahāyāna inscriptions," and some of the visual materials.

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Chapter Four

ACCOMMODATION FOR CONTINUING UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT EARLY MAHĀYĀNA IN INDIA

蒋 The Relevance of the Oldest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Scriptures

Official record says that Buddhism, after having spread through the oasis kingdoms along the Silk Road, arrived in China by the year 68 C.E.; it was then that the White Horse Monastery (白馬寺) was built in the city of Lo-yang (洛陽).[17] In its embryonic phase (to ca. 300 C.E., according to Erik Zürcher),[18] Chinese Buddhism already contained numerous accounts of missionary activities, patronage, temple building, and scriptural translation. By the end

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17. Cf. Sei Wada, "On the Date of the Spread of Buddhism to the East," 1978. The date given in the official record has been questioned, but my purpose here is to present a rough background to this chapter.

18. Erik Zürcher, "The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Culture in an Historical Perspective," 1989, p. 123. Also see his "Buddhism in China," 1985. For a general paper which introduces the main periods of Chinese Buddhism see David W. Chappell, "Hermeneutical Phases in Chinese Buddhism," 1988.

of the second century a number of Buddhist scriptures had been translated into Chinese. This was accomplished mainly by groups under the direction of such eminent figures as the Parthian An Shih-kao (安世高), who arrived in Lo-yang in 148 and was active until roughly 170 C.E., and the Indo-Scythian Lokakṣema (支婁迦讖, active ca. 168-189 C.E.). From a somewhat simplistic perspective of the *yāna* distinction, while the works translated by An Shih-kao are mostly non-Mahāyāna, those by Lokakṣema are Mahāyāna.[19] Following the final collapse of the Eastern Han dynasty (東漢) in 220 C.E., the Lokakṣema and An Shih-kao translations had a noticeable impact on the emerging gentry Buddhism. Their influence was later eclipsed by the translations by Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什, 344-413, variant 409 C.E.) and his renowned successors. However, in recent years these earliest translations have been enjoying an upsurge of scholarly attention despite their abstruse literary style. They serve as valuable source material for research into the Northwestern Prakrits, Sanskritized Prakrits, and early Chinese vernaculars.[20] In addition, because they apparently predate the oldest extant

19. For a bibliography of the works on Chinese translation of Buddhist texts see Kazuo Okabe, "Some Preliminary Remarks on the History of Chinese Translation of Buddhist Scriptures," 1981. For additional bibliographical comments on An Shih-kao and Lokakṣema see Antonino Forte, "An Shigao 安世高 and his Descendants," 1992; Paul Harrison, "The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sūtras: Some Notes on the Works of Lokakṣema," 1993.

20. For related discussion see Erik Zürcher, "Late Han Vernacular Elements in the Earliest Buddhist Translations," 1977; "A New Look at the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Texts," 1991; Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "Stages in the transcription of Indian words in Chinese from Han to Tan," 1983; K. R. Norman, "The Languages of Early Buddhism," 1993, especially pp. 86-87; Victor H. Mair, "Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia," 1994.

Sanskrit manuscripts and "Mahāyāna inscriptions" by several centuries, any comprehensive exploration of early Mahāyāna cannot afford to ignore them.[21]

K. R. Norman, a distinguished philologist specializing in Indian languages and dialects, reinforces the argument that "[a]ll traditions which we possess have been translated at least once," and that even "the Pāli canon is a translation from some earlier tradition, and cannot be regarded as a primary source."[22] He then concludes his detailed examination with the remark: "The result of all this is not to weaken the authority of the Pāli tradition, but to show conclusively that all schools inherited an authoritative series of texts" (*ibid.*, p. 9). Although Professor Norman focuses mainly on non-Mahāyāna texts, such as the *Dhammapada* and the *Sutta-nipāta*, his philological approach to Buddhism contributes to a better understanding of the nature and development of various versions of the Buddhist canon.[23] In this regard it can be argued that Chinese translation of Mahāyāna texts as a whole are not necessarily less authoritative than any other tradition simply because they

21. See Lewis R. Lancaster, "The Oldest Mahāyāna Sūtra: Its Significance for the Study of Buddhist Development," 1975; "The Editing of Buddhist Texts," 1977; Paul Harrison, "Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle?" 1987, p. 68.

22. K. R. Norman, "The Value of the Pāli Tradition," 1984, pp. 5 and 4. Also see his "The Development of the Middle Indo-Aryan Dialects," 1994.

23. For Norman's own interpretation of "a philological approach to Buddhism," see his "Why Buddhism?" 1995. In addition to "a better understanding of texts," he remarks: "A philological approach can also lead to a better understanding of the way in which the Buddhist tradition was transmitted, how the various versions of the Buddhist canon were developed, how translations were made from one dialect or language to another, how cultural developments had an influence on Buddhist texts, and consequently how Buddhism itself developed" (*ibid.*, p. 16).

are a translation. Different perspectives have various means for evaluating the authority of a translation and such efforts work best on a case by case basis.[24]

Lewis Lancaster and Paul Harrison are among the few scholars who draw on the oldest Chinese translations to enrich their exploration of the "early phases" of Mahāyāna in India and China. As Lancaster remarks,

> Far too often, there is the tacit assumption that a Sanskrit edition represents the 'original,' when in fact such editions are usually based on manuscripts that come from a relatively late period of Buddhist history in India. The discovery of fragments and texts in Central Asia and Gilgit has offered additional proof that the Sanskrit tradition for Buddhist sūtras was by no means an unchanging one, and the ancient fragments suggest great differences from the manuscripts of the Pāla Dynasty or those preserved in Nepal. . . . It is no longer feasible to dismiss the differences between the early Chinese versions and the later Sanskrit tradition as only representing abbreviations or the whim of the translators, for there are examples of ancient Sanskrit texts which match very closely the translations made in China.[25]

"The tacit assumption" that the Sanskrit edition represents the "original," to which Lancaster refers, is still quite fashionable among many scholars. Hajime Nakamura (*Indian Buddhism*, 1987), for example, states: "With regard to the question when and where the bulky sūtras of Mahāyāna were produced, the sūtras contain no information whatever. For this reason modern

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24. K. R. Norman ("The Value of the Pāli Tradition," 1984) writes: "The value of a text, in the form in which we have it, depends upon (1) the accuracy with which the various translations in its history have been made, which depended upon the knowledge and skill of its various translators, and (2) the accuracy with which the oral and scribal tradition handed the text down between translations" (p. 5).

25. Lewis R. Lancaster, "The Oldest Mahāyāna Sūtra: Its Significance for the Study of Buddhist Development," 1975, pp. 40-41. Similarly, Paul Harrison, "Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle?" 1987, p. 68.

critical studies of the scriptures are prerequisite for finding an answer to the question. The basic material for the critical studies of the sūtras of Mahāyāna Buddhism is their Sanskrit originals" (p. 154).

Lancaster, among other things, has extensively studied various Chinese translations of the *Aṣṭa* and the *Pañca* with the intent of drawing comparisons between these and the extant Sanskrit and Tibetan versions. In particular, he has focused on the way in which the meaning of some of the proper names and technical terms and doctrines were understood by such translators as Lokakṣema (支婁迦讖, active ca. 168-189 C.E.), Chih-ch'ien (支謙, d. ca. 255), Dharmarakṣa (竺法護, 233-ca. 311), and Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什, 344-ca. 413). Since these Chinese translations represent the earliest among the extant *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, careful and detailed study of them may help forge an important link in our fragmentary understanding of the development of the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures as well as of the Mahāyāna tradition.[26]

Lancaster then uses what may be described as an intra-textual approach

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26. Cf. Lewis R. Lancaster, *An Analysis of the Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-Sūtra from the Chinese Translations*, Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1968; "The Chinese Translation of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra Attributed to Chih Ch'ien 支謙," 1969; "An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images," 1974; "The Story of a Buddhist Hero: 道行般若經中之薩陀波倫故事," 1974; "The Oldest Mahāyāna Sūtra: Its Significance for the Study of Buddhist Development," 1975; "The Editing of Buddhist Texts," 1977; "Samādhi Names in Buddhist Texts," 1976; "The Bodhisattva Concept: A Study of the Chinese Buddhist Canon," 1981; "Gilgit to Korea: The Search for the Sources of the Chinese Buddhist Canon," 1985.

For additional bibliography see Edward Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*, 1978; Zenryū Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism: From Its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yüan*, vol. I, 1985, pp. 361-385; Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*, 1987, pp. 159-166.

which examines similarities and alternative readings as recorded in different versions of the scriptures that are classified within the same text family. In contrast to Lancaster's move toward intra-textual study, Harrison's approach, especially in his "Lokakṣema Project," may be best described as inter-textual. Commenting on his own methodology, Harrison remarks: "[Mine] is therefore synchronic and localised, and it has a fairly modest objective, i.e., to describe Lokakṣema's Mahāyāna."[27] According to the *Ch'u san tsang chi chi* (出三藏記集, a catalogue compiled by Seng-yu (僧祐) in ca. 515) Lokakṣema translated fourteen scriptures (*T.* 2145, vol. 55, p. 6b). About nine of them have survived to the present. Since these scriptures presumably belong to different text families and also constitute our earliest dateable textual evidence for Mahāyāna, a thorough examination of them will have the advantage of avoiding the excessive reliance on a single text family, and hopefully will contribute toward a clearer picture of Mahāyāna during its early centuries in India.

27. Paul Harrison, "Searching for the Origins of the Mahāyāna: What are We Looking For?" 1995, p. 53. Also see his "Buddhānusmṛti in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra," 1978; "Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle? Self-Image and Identity Among the Followers of the Early Mahāyāna," 1987; "Is the *Dharma-Kāya* the Real 'Phantom Body' of the Buddha?" 1992; "The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sūtras: Some Notes on the Works of Lokakṣema," 1993. Cf. Zenryū Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism: From Its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yüan*, vol. I, 1985, pp. 98-112.

※ The Fallacy of Assuming a Framework of Linear Development for Early Mahāyāna based on the First Chinese Translations

Scholarly works such as those by Lancaster and Harrison have attempted to cast new light on early Mahāyāna by focusing on a few applicable and pertinent documents. The findings of their works are significant, in particular by their departure from the conventional demarcation of Mahāyāna on many crucial points (see especially Lancaster 1975; Harrison 1987, 1995). We must not ignore the oldest Chinese translations as key markers of early Mahāyāna. They attest both to the many-sided nature of early Mahāyāna and to the necessity for a reexamination of popular assumptions about early Mahāyāna held by many other scholars.

Although these translations are our earliest dateable textual evidence for Mahāyāna, this fact does not automatically guarantee that they are collectively the direct witnesses of the formative stages of Mahāyāna, nor do they necessarily date from the time when Mahāyāna began to take shape in Greater India. We are faced with the question of whether these translations actually embody the "origins" or "beginnings" of Mahāyāna.

Most of the Chinese translations, transmitted with remarkable fidelity in their subsequent redactions in Chinese, can be accurately dated. However, our evidence is sufficiently scarce that we know very little about the exemplars, or sources, of these translations. Furthermore, the course of the many

translations throughout history does not seem to have been planned or organized in any systematic manner. Quite the contrary, the majority of missionaries and translators based their choice of the particular scriptures to translate on a complex set of interactive factors, such as personal expertise and preferences, social expectations, and textual availability. In light of this history of the translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, it is unlikely that there could have been a set lapse of time between the appearance of a scripture in Greater India and its translation in China. Consequently, one cannot infer that an earlier date of translation in China necessarily signifies an earlier date of appearance in Greater India.[28] Harrison's study brings out more precise manifestations of this:

> One particularly bedevilled aspect of the whole problem is that of chronology: we have no clear idea of when the Mahāyāna arose, and the only basis we have for dating any given item from its enormous corpus of sūtra-literature is the date of its first translation into Chinese. Since we cannot assume a set lapse of time between the composition of a sūtra in Greater India and its appearance in China, when it comes to assigning a date to these texts and the developments they embody we are groping in the dark. For the same reason it cannot be supposed that because Lokakṣema's sūtras were the first to be translated into Chinese, they were also the first to be written. ("The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sūtras," 1993, p. 139.)

Evidence not only from the history of the translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese but also from the contents of these translations

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[28]. The major components of the *Āgama* scriptures, for example, generally considered to be the fundamentals of the Buddha's teachings, were not translated into Chinese until the 4th/5th century C.E. For related discussion see Yūjirō Hayashiya, "Anseikō yaku no Zōagon to Zōitsuagon" (The *Saṃyukta Āgama* and the *Ekottara Āgama* translated by An Shih-kao 安世高), 1937; *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Fascicle: Acala - Ākaṅ, 1963, pp. 241-248.

points to the unlikeliness that said translations equally embody the "origins" or "beginnings" of Mahāyāna. In this regard Akira Hirakawa argues that because a small fraction of the earliest Chinese translations include references to four or five other scriptures,

> the *sūtras* translated by Lokakṣema and Chih Ch'ien were not the first Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Rather, these translations clearly reveal the existence of an even earlier group of Mahāyāna scriptures.[29]

Although this challenges the presumption that these Chinese translations represent the earliest Mahāyāna sūtras, the number of reference to supposedly still earlier scriptures is extremely small. The majority of these translations clearly do not refer to any other textual tradition. Hirakawa's reasoning therefore suggests the theoretical possibility that most of the exemplars of these translations are, or are very close to, the first Mahāyāna sūtras. His conclusion that "the *sūtras* translated by Lokakṣema and Chih Ch'ien were not the first Mahāyāna *sūtras*" appears to be overly

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29. Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, 1990, p. 252. See also pp. 274-277. To sum up, the 六般羅蜜經 (*Ṣaṭ-pāramitā*) is referred to in such scriptures as the 佛說遺日摩尼寶經 (*T.* 350, *Kāśyapa-parivarta-sūtra*) translated by Lokakṣema in 179 C.E. and the 佛說阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經 (*T.* 362, The Larger *Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra*) translated by Chih-ch'ien (支謙) between 223-253. The 菩薩藏經 (*Bodhisattva-piṭaka*) is also cited in the 佛說遺日摩尼寶經 (*T.* 350, *Kāśyapa-parivarta-sūtra*) as well as Dharmarakṣa's (竺法護) 289 C.E. translation of the 佛說離垢施女經 (*T.* 338, *Vimaladattā-paripṛcchā-sūtra*). Moreover, the 三品經 (*Triskandhaka-dharma-paryāya*) is cited in such texts as the translation of the 法鏡經 (*T.* 322, *Ugradatta-paripṛcchā-sūtra*) by An-hsüan (安玄) in 181, the *Vimaladattā-paripṛcchā-sūtra*, etc. Finally, the 道智大經 (*Tao-chih ta-ching*; the Great Sūtra of the Wisdom of the Way) is also cited in the Larger *Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra*. For elaboration of this analysis see Akira Hirakawa, *Shoki Daijō Bukkyō no Kenkyū* (Studies on Early Mahāyāna Buddhism), 1968, pp. 120-133. For a critical review of Hirakawa's theory of the origin of Mahāyāna see Sasaki Shizuka, "A Study on the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism," 1997. For related discussion see Paul Harrison, "Searching for the Origins of the Mahāyāna," 1995, especially pp. 55-56. See also Nancy J. Barnes, "The *Triskandha*, Practice in Three Parts: Study of an Early Mahāyāna Buddhist Ritual," 1993.

presumptuous since he indiscriminately applies his argument to the translations of Lokakṣema and Chih Ch'ien as a whole. On the other hand, just because we do not see references to other textual traditions within the majority of the translations of Lokakṣema and Chih Ch'ien, does not mean that other textual traditions did not exist.

Based on his understanding of the development of the Mahāyāna tradition, Paul Harrison poses an argument for the existence of Mahāyāna sūtras predating the Lokakṣema translation.

> In fact their [i.e., Lokakṣema's sūtras'] level of development, both in form and in content, shows . . . that the Mahāyāna reached China in full bloom, with perhaps several centuries of growth behind it, while the texts with which it [i.e., the Mahāyāna] made its initial impact there, far from being the first outpourings of the movement, represent a fairly advanced stage in a long literary tradition. ("The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sūtras," 1993, pp. 139-140.)

His reasoning for classifying Lokakṣema's translations "as works of the *early middle* period of the [Mahāyāna] movement"[30] rests, as did Hirakawa's, on the presence of references to supposedly still earlier textual traditions within a small number of these translations. Harrison differs from Hirakawa by suggesting a longer lapse of time between these translations and their original appearances in Greater India.[31] Here the point picked up by him is

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30. Paul Harrison, "Searching for the Origins of the Mahāyāna," 1995, p. 56. For the reference to the so-called Early Middle Mahāyāna see Harrison, "The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sūtras: Some Notes on the Works of Lokakṣema," 1993, pp. 140, 169-170; "Is the *Dharma-kāya* the Real 'Phantom Body' of the Buddha?" 1992, p. 68.

31. Paul Harrison (1995, p. 55) remarks: "As Professor Hirakawa has noted, the *sūtras* translated by Lokakṣema were probably composed at some time before 150 C.E., but

that "by the time of Lokakṣema the Mahāyāna had already been in existence for several centuries" (1995, p. 56). No matter how he reaches this conclusion, it seems safe to say that his characterization of most of Lokakṣema's translations as belonging to the "Early Middle Mahāyāna" refers to a chronological sense, if nothing more.

Harrison seems to link chronology with Lokakṣema's sūtras' "level of development, both in form and in content," in a literary tradition. He tends to further assume a correlation between these two aspects of development -- chronological and literary -- an assumption for which he offers no evidence. To the best of my knowledge, he nowhere gives the crucial expression "level of development" anything like a working delineation. As a consequence, there is no way of telling (1) how he characterizes different "levels" of development; and (2) whether the term "development" is also used in its doctrinal, religious, historical, cultural, or any other sense.

On the one hand Harrison states: "I still believe we can use the translations of Lokakṣema, our oldest dateable evidence, to draw some conclusions about the nature of at least some forms of the Mahāyāna as it entered its medieval phase, conclusions which may also hold good for its earliest period" (1995, p. 56). On the other, he asserts that "the Mahāyāna reached China in full bloom," and that the texts translated into Chinese

some of them appear already to have undergone a long process of accretion. He thus pushes the date of their composition back in many cases to the 1st century C.E., but it is difficult to be sure if this is going far enough."

around Lokakṣema's time "represent a fairly advanced stage in a long literary tradition" (1993, p. 140). Such descriptive phrases as "in full bloom" and "a fairly advanced stage" do not appear to be used in a chronological sense. Instead, they primarily refer to the literary aspect. What seems most puzzling is that Harrison concludes that Lokakṣema's translations evidence Mahāyāna "in full bloom" and simultaneously assigns them to the "Early Middle Mahāyāna." In the end, the lack of documentation about what constitutes "full bloom" and "Early Middle Mahāyāna" makes it incredibly difficult to definitively argue one theory over another.

The above problem stands out as an example of scholarship that gets tangled up in the tricky task of fitting Mahāyāna scriptures into an unfit framework of linear development. The primary difficulty appears to be as Harrison describes in his 1995 article,

> To begin with, to be frank, I doubt that I or anyone else can say anything definite about the origins of the Mahāyāna or -- and this may be less expected -- even about early Mahāyāna. The more I work in this field the more sceptical I become about such an undertaking. (p. 55.)

Such description by no means constitutes a defeatist point of view. Rather, it exemplifies a genuine reflection on a point which is extremely important for all scholars in the field of Mahāyāna to bear in mind: uncertainty and obscurity play a critical part in the formation of our knowledge of early Mahāyāna.

Moving Beyond Linear Notions of Development

The present work maintains that the early Chinese translations presuppose still earlier exemplars which came all the way from Greater India to China, and that a small number of these translations refer to supposedly still earlier scriptures. Unfortunately, we do not know what percentage of the early Mahāyāna scriptures were translated into Chinese, nor do we know how great a lapse of time lies between the earliest appearance of each Mahāyāna scripture in Greater India and its transmission to the particular Chinese exemplar. The earliest appearance of each Mahāyāna scripture can in turn be regarded as the result of its formative years following the "origin" of its own tradition. As we continue our examination of the clues about the "origins" of Mahāyāna in early Chinese translations of scriptures, there are at least two more matters we do not know: (1) how the origins of the individual Mahāyāna scriptural traditions related to one another; and (2) how the origins of the Mahāyāna scriptural tradition related to the origins of the Mahāyāna epigraphy or art objects. The complex of these time factors lies behind our oldest Mahāyāna scriptural sources, and appears to stay beyond our reach, for at present we have no clear idea of the circumstances under which the exemplars of these translations emerged in Greater India and later spread. In this vein it is hard to say precisely what the expression the "origins of Mahāyāna" may denote.

Even our oldest Mahāyāna scriptures do not reveal to us the way in which

the various Mahāyāna traditions developed in relation to each other over time. Assigning time to the complex factors which lead to the development of various Mahāyāna scriptural, art-historical, and epigraphical traditions is difficult. Scholars face the danger of over-simplifying events and making arbitrary estimations of chronology. In particular, assigning time to the development of the various Mahāyāna traditions appears especially problematic. Under these circumstances it is important to refocus what we hope to accomplish by pursuing the origins of Mahāyāna. I am going to propose that linear development is a problem -- first let us look at how such a concept has influenced the origin-discourse.

Many pioneers as well as contemporary writers on the topic of the origins of Mahāyāna, or on the topic of the origin of a specific Mahāyāna scriptural tradition, have overlooked the complexity of the factors, and functioned under relatively simplistic notions of Mahāyāna's development. Edward Conze, a prominent pioneer in the study of Mahāyāna, remarks: "In point of *time* the rise of the Mahayana coincides with the beginning of the Christian era."[32] Concerning the origin of a specific Mahāyāna scriptural tradition, he asserts that the "original impulse" of the *Prajñāpāramitā* tradition, widely regarded as the first Mahāyāna literature, emerged for the first time in ca. 100

32. Edward Conze, "Mahayana Buddhism," 1967, p. 48. Similarly, he assumes "about the beginning of the Christian era [to be] the starting-point for the Mahāyāna" (*Buddhist Thought in India*, 1967, p. 195). Also see his *A Short History of Buddhism*, 1993, pp. 41-42.

B.C.E.[33] But why the beginning of the Christian era and 100 B.C.E. respectively? He offers a description of the influence Christianity or religions to the northwest of India had on the origins of Mahāyāna.[34] A number of scholars have objected to this explanation, in part because it contradicts evidence within the oldest extant Mahāyāna sūtras.[35]

Hajime Nakamura (*Indian Buddhism*, 1987, pp. 149-234) and Akira Hirakawa (*A History of Indian Buddhism*, 1990, pp. 247-295), among contemporary scholars, have engaged extensively in an origin-discourse on Mahāyāna that is based on two premises. The first is an assumption of a set lapse of time, ranging from fifty to one hundred and fifty years, between the appearance of a certain scriptural tradition (oral or written) in Greater India

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33. Edward Conze, "The Development of Prajñāpāramitā Thought," 1967, p. 124; *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*, 1978, p. 1.

34. For example, in his 1967 article, "Mahayana Buddhism," Conze asserts that "the literature which sets out the specific Mahayana doctrines is attested only for the beginning of the Christian era, and this raises an interesting, and so far unresolved historical problem. How can we account for the observation that Buddhism, just at the time when Christianity itself arose, underwent a radical reform of its basic tenets which made it much more similar to Christianity than it had been before?" (p. 48).

Moreover, in his *A Short History of Buddhism*, Conze portrays the emergence of Mahāyāna as a process of "de-Indianization," which resulted from being heavily exposed to non-Indian influences especially in the Northwest of India (1993, pp. 41-42). Similarly, "Mahayana Buddhism," 1967, pp. 49-50. In this regard he tends to identify the spread of Mahāyāna in the Northwest of India as the origin of Mahāyāna. However, he provides no corroborative evidence to show how this identification could be justified. Interestingly enough, his arguments here are in direct contradiction to what he tries to counter-challenge Étienne Lamotte, who is inclined to localize the formation of Mahāyāna in the Northwest of India and the region of Khotan. We will return to this issue later in the chapter dealing with the geographical origins of Mahāyāna.

35. See especially Paul Harrison, "Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle? Self-Image and Identity Among the Followers of the Early Mahāyāna," 1987; "Is the *Dharma-Kāya* the Real 'Phantom Body' of the Buddha?" 1992.

and its translation into Chinese. An example can be found in Hirakawa's discussion of the group of the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras:

> The oldest *sūtra* in this group is the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (*T* 224) translated by Lokakṣema. Since the translation was completed around 179, the original text probably dates back to the first century C.E. (Hirakawa 1990, p. 277.)

This statement tells us that Hirakawa projects a relatively arbitary lapse of time of some one hundred years onto the case under discussion, and presumably onto other cases as well. Such a projection regarding chronology overlooks the complex and interacting factors behind the development of the many textual, art-historical, and epigraphical traditions that remain clouded behind the oldest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna scriptures.

The second premise behind the work of both Nakamura and Hirakawa is an assumption regarding the dating of texts that refer to the making or visualization of the Buddha image. In particular, they mechanically assign this sort of text to a date later than the so-called aniconic phase, i.e., to a date during or after the last half of the first century C.E. when, in their view, images of the Buddha first appeared (e.g., Nakamura 1987, pp. 154, 156; Hirakawa 1990, pp. 248, 250, 268-269, 272, 283). We will return to this issue later in the chapter regarding visual materials.

To attribute the Buddha image exclusively to the Mahāyāna tradition preceded by an aniconic phase is an outdated treatment of the related art-historical issues. As both John and Susan Huntington point out, scholars have assigned so many scriptures, including a very widely divergent range of

teachings and practices to a relatively packed period that they have created an improbable picture of the past.[36] If one were to take both Nakamura and Hirakawa's dating of the origins of Mahāyāna, including the origins of individual scriptural traditions, and plot them along a time line, one might wonder if the period 50 to 150 C.E. is too short to be the time frame wherein so many different scriptures, teachings and practices are said to have originated. Given that almost nothing is known about the spread of the early Mahāyāna scriptures in ancient India, these two scholars' origin-discourse on Mahāyāna appears speculative and rather problematic.

A related and probably more puzzling aspect of both Nakamura's and Hirakawa's works is the assumption that the development of Mahāyāna moved through progressive stages, each with a relatively discernible beginning and end. An example of this practice can be found from Nakamura's summary of Shizutani's studies:

> Epigraphic evidence and the dates of Chinese translations of Mahāyāna texts have been used by Shizutani Masao to distinguish between "Proto-Mahāyāna," a movement that did not use the appellation *Mahāyāna*, and the more self-conscious "Early Mahāyāna." (The first scripture to use the term *Mahāyāna* is the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Sūtra*, dating in its earliest verses to perhaps the first century BCE but containing sections from later periods.) Shizutani designates the period 100 to 1 BCE as the incipient stage of Proto-Mahāyāna, 1 to 100 CE as its developed stage, 50 to 100 as the incipient stage of Early Mahāyāna, and 100 to 250 as the developed stage of Early Mahāyāna.[37]

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36. John C. Huntington, "Mathurā Evidence for the Early Teachings of Mahāyāna," 1989, p. 88; "Rebirth in Amitābha's Sukhāvatī," 1996, especially pp. 98-101; Susan L. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," 1990, p. 406.

37. Hajime Nakamura, "Mahayana Buddhism," 1987, p. 216. Similarly, see his *Indian Buddhism*, 1987, p. 152. Cf. Masao Shizutani, *Shoki Daijō Bukkyō no Seiritsu Katei*

Extant epigraphical evidence, as we shall see in Chapter Seven, has little to do with the time frames referred to in the above quote. Even though few dispute Shizutani's assertion that the *Aṣṭa* dates back to the first century B.C.E., his designation of the period from 100 to 1 B.C.E. as the stage of the proto-Mahāyāna appears inconsistent with his own definition of the so-called proto-Mahāyāna. These dates are based on speculation, and thus reflect a quest for certainty. Their dating as a whole gives a monolithic account of historically obscure and complex phenomena, and therefore reduces this topic to one with clearly identifiable stages of progressive sequence, each stage being assigned rather precise dates of beginning and end.

Studying early Mahāyāna is as compelling as it is fraught with difficulties. The first and most fundamental step is to thoroughly question the grounds on which a study of early Mahāyāna should proceed. Despite our best efforts, some aspects of Mahāyāna will remain uncertain, and we must treat them as such. Scholars should not assume a preconceived framework but rather individually consider applicable instantiations in order to accurately understand early Mahāyāna. The imposed presumption of distinct stages of the early Mahāyāna inevitably compels analytical precision, which in turn leads scholars to attempt to "'save appearances,' an expression that derives from efforts to maintain the Ptolemaic cosmos in the face of mounting

(The Process of the Origination of Early Mahāyāna), 1974, pp. 9-50; 273-298.

contradictory evidence."[38] We must avoid creating a paradigm which correlates stages of development with time which may have never actually existed. With this perspective, we will then have available a preliminary methodological basis for better refocusing attention on our documents.

An Example: The *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (道行般若經)

To conclude this chapter we return to the question of the level of development of our oldest extant Mahāyāna sūtras. Our major windows to early Mahāyāna in Greater India, these sūtras, mostly in Chinese, are too important to ignore. These sūtras' levels of development within the Mahāyāna tradition is anything but unified or indubitable. Uncertainty and controversy continue to surround these sūtras collectively and individually. Therefore we must conduct our investigation with the following cautions. First, we must explicitly define the key term "development." Second we must develop a conceptualization of levels of development within Mahāyāna's early stages. To create an appropriate framework we probably will assume a set of attributes as the criteria to judge the stage or level under consideration, attributes which are not only derived from, but applicable to, these sūtras and possibly other suitable documents. Even if one were to generate such attributes, one could still face a possible accusation of operating under the fallacy of

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38. I owe this reference to Richard S. Cohen. See his "Discontended Categories: Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in Indian Buddhist History," 1995, p. 4.

essentialism, which assumes, in the case of Mahāyāna, the existence of a core group of characteristics that is capable of describing all of Mahāyāna.

Within the documents that define the term "Mahāyāna" or articulate its characteristics it is possible to discuss the term "Mahāyāna" and its characteristics. Similarly, one can discuss "levels of development" on the basis of a certain Mahāyāna document if enough information is available, the key terms are specified, and extreme care is exercised. We may not generalize such conclusions about development to apply to Mahāyāna as a whole.

The problems of assuming a framework of distinct and linear stages within the development of early Mahāyāna can best be illustrated through an example. The *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (*T.* 224), as with the *Aṣṭa* in general, is the oldest extant version of any Mahāyāna sūtra and is commonly considered the forerunner of later doctrinal developments. Paul Harrison, for example, writes,

> The *Aṣṭa*, a long work written entirely in prose, is one of the most important Mahāyāna sūtras. Now widely regarded as the oldest Prajñāpāramitā ('Perfection of Wisdom') text, on which all others are in one way or another based, it is itself the product of a long process of textual development and accretion. ("The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sūtras," 1993, p. 142.)

In a more extended manner, Yensho Kanakura remarks that "they [i.e., the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*] occupy an extremely important position as forerunners and sources of later Mahāyāna scriptures."[39] Since the *Tao-hsing*

39. Yensho Kanakura, *Hindu-Buddhist Thought in India*, 1980, p. 122. Hajime Nakamura expresses the same view. See his "Mahayana Buddhism," 1987, p. 222; *Indian*

pan-jo ching is the oldest extant Mahāyāna sūtra, it seems quite natural to presume that this particular sūtra, together with the *Aṣṭa* and even with the entire *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, should have acted as a forerunner and source of the "later Mahāyāna scriptures." Our methodology for describing this sūtra's level of spiritual development may distort understanding of it. In fact it contains many complexities that leave us looking for new criteria for determining the development of Mahāyāna texts.

It remains problematic to articulate the essential characteristics of Mahāyāna apart from an investigation of the applicable and individual instantiations. However, with appropriate consideration of the related issues we can outline the basic patterns of practices and doctrines that characterize a certain Mahāyāna sūtra. As its title indicates, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature aims at propounding *prajñāpāramitā* as its pivotal dharma. Certainly no one familiar with the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature would dispute the extreme importance of *prajñāpāramitā* for understanding this literature. However, it is presumptuous to view the dharma "*prajñāpāramitā*" as an essential characteristic throughout all of Mahāyāna. If this dharma is a criterion to judge levels of spiritual development within the Mahāyāna tradition, there are few documents other than this literature that further develop their idea of *prajñāpāramitā* from the groundwork this literature provides. In terms of this dharma, the *Aṣṭa* should therefore not be

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Buddhism, 1987, p. 159.

characterized as low in spiritual development, even though it is widely regarded as the oldest extant Mahāyāna scripture. On the other hand, should one exclude the dharma "*prajñāpāramitā*" from the set of criteria for judging the *Aṣṭa*'s level of spiritual development, a deficient, if not distorted, understanding of this development results, because the exclusion of this dharma effectively overlooks one of the most important components of the sūtra in question. Consequently, there are great objections to the widely accepted presumption that the *Aṣṭa* is one of the forerunners and sources of the later Mahāyāna scriptures, whether or not the dharma "*prajñāpāramitā*" is taken as a criterion. The *Aṣṭa* contains many other notable dharmas, such as *dharma-kāya*, *bhūta-koṭi*, *adhiṣṭāna*, and *upāya-kauśalya*, and each of them is sure to add complexity to understanding its level of spiritual development.[40] In addition to spiritual development, development can be studied from other aspects -- documentary, social, cultural, to name but a few.

What stands out in the preceding discussion is twofold. The endeavor to characterize the *Aṣṭa*'s level of development within the Mahāyāna tradition is complicated by the incongruity between its level of spiritual development and the historical stages of Mahāyāna. Although the Lokakṣema texts were translated into Chinese in a short period during the second half of the second

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40. Cf. Lewis R. Lancaster, "The Oldest Mahāyāna Sūtra: Its Significance for the Study of Buddhist Development," 1975; Frederick J. Streng, "Realization of *Param Bhūtakoti* (ultimate reality-limit) in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*," 1982; Paul Harrison, "Is the *Dharma-kāya* the Real 'Phantom Body' of the Buddha?" 1992; Jan A. de Breet, "The Concept Upāyakauśalya in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā," 1992.

century C.E., their richness and diversity pose a big challenge both to the tendency to assign them to a single level of development and to the conventional treatment of them as forerunners and sources of the later Mahāyāna scriptures. As I have discussed above, among these early Mahāyāna sūtras, there are practices and doctrines that should not be characterized as low in spiritual development compared with those of the later stages of Mahāyāna. We still do not know nearly enough about this subject to understand how historical events could have actually influenced the spiritual development of Mahāyāna. However, the simultaneous existence of both clearly developed and still developing dharmas seems to shatter the conceptualization of evolutionist or progressive historical stages. In this respect, we must not confuse the extant Mahāyāna sūtras' levels of spiritual development, no matter how they are characterized, with the historical stages of Mahāyāna. Similarly we cannot apply our conclusions based on one sūtra to the broad task of tracing the historical development of early Mahāyāna. The reality of the history of early Mahāyāna, after all, may not follow a developmental, evolutionist, or progressive routine that our frameworks of historical stages have constructed.

Previous studies have failed to distinguish the historical stages of Mahāyāna from various levels of the multifaceted development of the Mahāyāna sūtras. As a result they have created a paradigm of linear development of the history of early Mahāyāna that can hardly represent any

verifiable tradition. Revisiting and problematizing this dominant paradigm is meant to liberate us from the ways such linear frameworks have limited our understanding of the oldest extant Mahāyāna sūtras.

Until such time as scholars accurately identify the corpus of the early Mahāyāna texts, verifiably apprehend their relationships, and faithfully analyze their contents, it will not be possible to appropriately formulate a description of the multifaceted development of these texts. Such an endeavor will no doubt find that there is nothing self-evident about the historical development of early Mahāyāna. Even with the evidence from the oldest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna scriptures presently available, the historical development of early Mahāyāna remains mostly wrapped in obscurity. We should not be so invested in defending our preconceived frameworks of the historical stages of early Mahāyāna. Instead, students of Buddhism must be open to recognizing uncertainties in our evidence and question how the uncertainties themselves might shed a different kind of light on Mahāyāna.



Chapter Five

GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGINS OF MAHĀYĀNA

As with the investigation of the time of Mahāyāna's origins, scholars also seek to learn the location of Mahāyāna's origins with the hope that this knowledge will shed new light on what make up the essential characteristics of Mahāyāna. For some scholars the determination of the geographical origins can raise charges of Westrn imperialism or Indian nationalism.[41] In order to shape their arguments to one side or the other, scholars may manipulate their interpretation of documents to fit into a political agenda. This chapter attempts to avoid the political implications associated with a place of origin and instead focuses on the scriptural evidence to support such arguments. The following discussion in particular centers around the theories put forward by two leading scholars in the origin-discourse, Étienne Lamotte and Edward Conze. Through comparing their arguments this chapter highlights some of

41. Cf. Susan L. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," 1990, p. 406.

the problems in the discourse on the geographical origins of Mahāyāna. This raises some important questions concerning how our notions of origin have distorted our interpretation of textual sources.

Given that we are unable to establish when Mahāyāna originated, the limitation of our sources makes it difficult to determine where Mahāyāna originated. One cannot pinpoint the geographical origins of Mahāyāna without elaborating on the time frame in which Mahāyāna may have originated. Our documents contain no causally or empirically explicit statements about the origins of Mahāyāna. Detailed knowledge of how Mahāyāna began has been for the most part lost. As my analysis in previous chapters has indicated, it is thus virtually implausible to discover the origins of Mahāyāna.

Questions about when and where Mahāyāna originated continue to arise in the scholarship of Buddhism. One can read in introductory works of Buddhism that Mahāyāna began in the second century C.E. (H. Nakamura), or shortly after or before the beginning of the common era, or around 200 B.C.E. (C. Prebish).[42] As Tilmann Vetter observes, "Even though the opinion amongst scholars was that these dates were based on shaky historical grounds, they

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42. Cf. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, 1967, p. 195; *A Short History of Buddhism*, 1993, p. 41; A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 2nd revised edition, 1980, p. 352; Richard H. Robinson, Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 3rd edition, 1982, p. 65; Étienne Lamotte, "Mahāyāna Buddhism," 1984, p. 90; Hajime Nakamura, "Mahāyāna Buddhism," 1987, pp. 215-216; *Indian Buddhism*, 1987, p. 151; David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, vol. one, 1987, p. 49; Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1989, p. 32; Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, 1990, p. 89; Charles S. Prebish, *Historical Dictionary of Buddhism*, 1993, p. 180.

still felt the need to state a date and, in principle, saw no objection to their choice."[43] No one can say when Mahāyāna actually began. The dates, commonly ranging from 200 B.C.E. to the second century C.E., created mostly out of scholars' unsupported preunderstandings, are designed to represent to us *settled*, yet simplistic, solutions to virtually insolvable questions.

常 Dominant Theories on the Geographical Origins of Mahāyāna

A number of scholars, most notably, in the West, Étienne Lamotte,[44] contend that Mahāyāna emerged in the northwest of India and beyond in Khotan. This thesis consists of the following four primary arguments. (1) There was a noticeable strength of Mahāyāna in the aforementioned locality during the early centuries C.E., evidenced through the travel accounts of Chinese pilgrims and the activities of the missionaries who went to China. (2) The religions and cultures to the west of India are considered to have had momentous influences on several key components of Mahāyāna sūtras, especially the notions of benevolence (*maitrī*), compasssion (*karuṇā*), image-making, and Buddha-realms. (3) Mahāyāna sūtras themselves, especially the Sadāprarudita chapter of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, are viewed as

43. Tilmann Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*, 1988, p. xiii. Vetter highlights the problematic schemes in dating the Buddha for which parallels in dating the origins of Mahāyāna may be found.

44. Étienne Lamotte, "Sur la Formation du Mahāyāna," 1954, especially pp. 381-386.

containing positive indications of the locality of Mahāyāna's emergence. (4) Ethnographic heterogeneity was a decisive factor in generating the changes in Buddhism that lead to Mahāyāna. Along these lines, Alex Wayman has sought to establish that "it was in the N. W. of India and beyond in Khotan that there were considerable numbers of converts to Buddhism by people of cultures quite different from that of India proper."[45] Both Wayman and Lamotte appear to reason that the rest of Greater India, especially South India, garnered devotion primarily from their own local and relatively homogeneous people and therefore did not foster the creative conflicts that led to a new type of Buddhism. As a result Mahāyāna could not have originated from more homogeneous areas such as the South.

A conviction that the emergence of Mahāyāna had to be the result of intercultural contact runs through the above arguments. In order to evaluate Lamotte's thesis objectively let us then turn to the most documentarily concrete aspect of his reasoning: the evidence within the Sadāprarudita chapter of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

The *Aṣṭa*'s Sadāprarudita chapter centers around the career of a Bodhisattva known as Sadāprarudita (Ever Weeping; Perpetually Weeping; 薩陀波倫; 常啼) who went on a precarious journey in search for instructions on the *Prajñāpāramitā*. During one of his previous lives a long time ago,

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45. Alex Wayman and Elizabeth Rosen, "The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Inscriptional Evidence at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa," 1990, p. 51.

Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita was guided, slowly and painfully, to "go east" to seek the *Prajñāpāramitā*. After journeying east for more than 20,000 leagues, requiring enormous vigor and great determination, Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita reached his destination, the kingdom of Gandhavatī (Endowed with Fragrance; The Fragrant; 揵陀越國). There Bodhisattva Dharmôdgata (Exalted by Dharma; 曇無竭; 法涌; 法上), the foremost among the Bodhisattvas in Gandhavatī, had long been, among other things, preaching the *Prajñāpāramitā*. The *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (*T*. 224) tells us that Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita "at present dwells in a Buddha-realm above, beyond 630 *niyutas* of *koṭis* of Buddha-realms, called Nitya-gandhabhāva (尼遮揵陀波勿) in which there is a Buddha called Gandhālaya (揵陀羅耶)."[46]

It is through the *Aṣṭa*'s Sadāprarudita chapter that Lamotte comes to assign the emergence of Mahāyāna specifically to Gandhāra and Khotan. In particular he emphasizes that Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita received instructions on the *Prajñāpāramitā* from Bodhisattva Dharmôdgata in the kingdom (or city) of Gandhavatī, which he associates with Gandhāra. This association of Gandhavatī with Gandhāra appears to be problematic. What follows is an investigation of the evidence to that end within the

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46. *T*. 224, vol. 8, p. 470c: 於今在上方過六百三十億佛國，佛名揵陀羅耶，其國名尼遮揵陀波勿：薩陀波倫菩薩於彼間止. According to the *T*. 225 (vol. 8, p. 503c), the name of the Buddha in question is Sugandha-kūṭa (香積), whose Buddha-realm is Sarva-gandha-sugandhā (眾香). Other versions/recensions, without mentioning the name of the Buddha-realm in question, tell us that the name of this particular Buddha is (Mahā-)Bhīṣma-garjita-nirghoṣa-svara (大雲雷音佛 *T*. 220(1), vol. 6, p. 1059a; 雷音如來 *T*. 221, vol. 8, p. 141b; 大雷音佛 *T*. 223, vol. 8, p. 416a; 雷音威王佛 *T*. 227, vol. 8, p. 580a; 雷吼音王如來 *T*. 228, vol. 8, p. 668a). Cf. *PWETL*, 1973, p. 277.

Prajñāpāramitā literature itself.

Descriptions of Gandhavatī, as with Buddha-realms and marvelous lands commonly depicted in Buddhist sūtras, lay great emphasis on its other-worldly qualities, such as its wondrous fragrance. For example, the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* explains: "the fragrant air, like heavenly fragrance, spreads and permeates all over, and everyone can smell it, therefore this kingdom is called Gandhavatī."[47] The quality of fragrance is highlighted not only in the Sadāprarudita chapter but in many other sūtras. The *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (the Teaching of Vimalakīrti), for example, also stresses the quality of fragrance while referring to Buddha Sugandha-kūṭa of the realm Sarva-gandha-sugandhā, which happens to be located above, beyond as innumerable Buddha-realms as the sand grains of forty-two Ganges rivers.[48] A careful reading of the description of Gandhavatī reveals that it was filled with wondrous objects as a result of persistent meritorious cultivation by the sentient beings involved therein (cf. *T.* 224, pp. 471c-472a, 473a-b; *PWETL*, pp. 279-281, 288). As the narrative goes, "There is not any other kind of people in this city [i.e., Gandhavatī], all of them Bodhisattvas -- some are well-established (in the Bodhisattva career), but others have just produced

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47. *T.* 224, vol. 8, p. 473a: 香風四散，分布四出，無不聞者，譬如天香，用是故名為揵陀越國.

48. Cf. Charles Luk (tr.), *The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, 1972, p. 101; Étienne Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 1976, pp. 204-205; Robert A. F. Thurman (tr.), *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 1976, p. 78.

the thought (of pursuing Enlightenment); they all live jointly in this city, and their happiness is beyond description."[49] There is little, if any, indication that the setting and people of Gandhavatī are illustrated with an attempt to fit in with our planet Earth, often referred to as *sahā-loka-dhātu* (the world around us; the world of endurance) or *pañca-kaṣāya-loka* (the world of five corruptions).[50] Neither the *Aṣṭa* nor the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* indicates anything like "northwest" as the direction associated either with Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita's journey or with Buddha Sugandha-kūṭa's realm. In the *Aṣṭa*, Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita went east on a spiritual quest. His journey, which can hardly be connected with any of our historical eras, took place a long long time ago. Therefore, judging from the *Aṣṭa*'s illustration of the setting and people of Gandhavatī as well as its references to directions, spatial distances, and time frames, we find little evidence to support the association of Gandhavatī with Gandhāra. In accordance with the above difficulties, it is problematic to base a thesis of Gandhāra origin of Mahāyāna on the association of Gandhavatī with Gandhāra.

Moreover, there appears to be no internal evidence in our sources giving reason to rule out the possibility of Mahāyāna originating in the many other

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49. *T.* 224, vol. 8, p. 471c: 其城中，無有異人，皆是菩薩，中有成就者，中有發意者，皆共居其中，快樂不可言.

50. The five corruptions are concerned respectively with the (false) view (*dṛṣṭi-kaṣāya*), defilement (*kleśa-kaṣāya*), being (*sattva-kaṣāya*), life span (*āyuṣ-kaṣāya*), and the world age (*kalpa-kaṣāya*).

geographical locations, some on earth, others outside of earth, mentioned in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. For example, the prediction (to the utmost right and perfect enlightenment) of the Goddess of the Ganges (Gaṅga-devā Bhaginī) consumes one whole chapter of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature (cf. *T.* 224, p. 458a-b; *PWETL*, pp. 219-221; *LSPW*, pp. 422-423). This chapter relates the career of this Ganges Goddess: how she planted her wholesome roots in the presence of Tathāgata Dīpaṃkara (Kindler of Lights) an endlessly long time ago, made necessary preparations for the utmost right and perfect enlightenment, came to Buddha Śākyamuni's assembly for the teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, would be reborn in Abhirati (Elation), the Buddha-realm of Tathāgata Akṣobhya (Imperturbable), and would eventually become a Tathāgata, "Suvarṇa-puṣpa" (Golden Flower) by name. The narrative of the career of this Ganges Goddess appears as early as in the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (*T.* 224), and there is no good reason to assume this narrative to be less significant in terms of locality than the Sadāprarudita chapter. This, in turn, poses a serious challenge to Lamotte's thesis in question.

Lamotte's attachment to Gandhavatī and its modern day equivalent is best explained by his assumption that Mahāyāna originated when Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita received instructions on the *Prajñāpāramitā*. The Sadāprarudita chapter does not imply any conception of "origin" concerning the *Prajñāpāramitā*. By no means does the time at which Bodhisattva

Sadāprarudita received instructions on the *Prajñāpāramitā* from Bodhisattva Dharmôdgata necessarily represent the absolute starting point of the tradition of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Bodhisattva Dharmôdgata had been preaching the *Prajñāpāramitā* in Gandhavatī long before Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita went on his journey (cf. *T.* 224, pp. 471c-472a, 473a-b, 474b-475a; *PWETL*, pp. 280-281, 288). As it is told in the Sadāprarudita chapter, Bodhisattva Dharmôdgata had, life after life, been Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita's preceptor in the *prajñāpāramitā* and many other Buddha-dharmas (cf. *T.* 224, pp. 472a, 473b; *PWETL*, pp. 281, 283, 290). Not only Bodhisattva Dharmôdgata but the Buddhas in countless worlds in all the ten directions had in the past, when they were Bodhisattvas, pursued the *Prajñāpāramitā* in a manner comparable to Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita's spirit of vigor and determination (*T.* 224, p. 472a; *PWETL*, pp. 281-282).

Through its suggestion of an ancient tradition stretching almost endlessly back in time, the sūtra effectively obscures any notion of origin fixed in time. Instead the sūtra suggests the notion of having no beginning (*an-āditā*; *an-āditva*; 無始) for the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Therefore not only is a thesis of Gandhāra origin of the *Prajñāpāramitā* neither supported by nor applicable to this narrative but the Sadāprarudita also does not maintain an idea of origin that is applicable to our study.

Edward Conze similarly focuses on Lamotte's use of scriptural sources as a basis for auguing against his theory of Northwest origin. Conze, who

theorizes that Mahāyāna originated in South India, suggests that Lamotte mistook reference to the events during the dissemination of Mahāyāna as evidence of its origin. He maintains that although "that region [i.e., the northwest of India] may well be the 'fortress and hearth', [it is] not necessarily the 'cradle' of the Mahāyānistic movement" (1978, p. 4). Conze believes that most of Lamotte's assertions about the occurrence of Mahāyāna apply, at best, only to later appearances of Mahāyāna. In particular he emphasizes that the entire Sadāprarudita chapter of the *Aṣṭa* "is a late *avadāna* which was added to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* centuries after its doctrines had been quite clearly formulated" (1978, p. 4). Therefore Conze, in his "The Composition of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā" (1952, especially pp. 251-253) and *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (1978, pp. 49-50), aims to establish that the Sadāprarudita chapter was a later addition to the *Aṣṭa* which cannot be used to localize the origins of Mahāyāna. He argues these points by comparing the Sadāprarudita chapter with other scriptural sources and drawing on assumptions about Mahāyāna's evolution from the metaphysical to mythological.

Conze compares the *Aṣṭa* with the *Prajñāpāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā* (abbreviated as *Prgsg*), which consists of 302 verses on the accumulation of the precious qualities of the Perfection of Wisdom, in order to scrutinize the earliness of the Sadāprarudita chapter. However, because the exact relationship between the *Prgsg* and the *Aṣṭa* -- whether the *Prgsg* is an

independent text, an abridgement or summary of the *Aṣṭa*, etc. -- still puzzles scholars, the validity of such a comparison comes into question.[51] Moreover, the original *Prgsg* is probably lost, and all of its extant recensions date after the eighth century C.E. It is evident that many, if not all, of its extant recensions have been revised by Haribhadra (ca. eighth century C.E.).[52] Therefore, it would not be appropriate to use such late recensions of doubtful authenticity to scrutinize the earliness of the Sadāprarudita chapter. Until such time as the relationship between these two texts, including their various recensions, can be definitively established, it remains somewhat unproductive arguing over the earliness of a certain portion of our texts simply on the basis of inconsistencies between them.

Apart from the above deficiencies, Conze's argument is weakened by his inability to consult Chinese translations.[53] The Sadāprarudita narrative appears as early as 179 C.E. in Lokakṣema's translation of the *Aṣṭa* (*T.* 224), and later in many other translated sūtras of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

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51. Cf. Akira Yuyama, "Hōtokuzōhannya ni kan-suru Jakkan no Mondai (Some Problems concerning the *Prajñā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā*)," 1973, especially pp. 272-275; *Prajñā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā (Sanskrit Recension A)*, 1976, pp. xvi-xix; Edward Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*, 1978, p. 9; Gregory Schopen, "Review of *Prajñā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā (Sanskrit Recension A)*, edited by Akira Yuyama, Cambridge University Press, 1976," 1978, especially pp. 112-113.

52. Cf. Edward Conze, "The Development of Prajñāpāramitā Thought," 1967, pp. 124-134; *PWETL*, 1973, pp. ix-xxii; *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*, 1978, pp. 9-10, 53-55.

53. Although Conze (1978, p. 49) refers to Lancaster's 1974 article on the Chinese translations of the Sadāprarudita narrative, the way in which he approaches this narrative virtually ignores its Chinese translations.

While comparing different versions of this narrative, Lewis Lancaster observes: "In terms of drama and fortuitous sequence of events, the story as told in early Chinese translations is superior to the remnant extant in the Sanskrit and later versions."[54] The Sadāprarudita narrative is not alone. The *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (*T.* 224) contains a number of other passages, such as the one concerning making and worshiping the image of the Buddha (see footnote 101), which are preserved in a more detailed manner than later versions/recensions, or are not found in most of the later versions/recensions.[55] This indicates that the complexities involved in the formation of the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*, especially of its Sadāprarudita narrative, in the context of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature cannot be explained simply by a linear pattern of development which axiomatically assumes gradual additions (or rarely omissions) made to texts.

In arguing that the Sadāprarudita chapter was a later addition to the *Aṣṭa*, Conze also draws on preformulated notions of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature's development. For example, he writes: "Originally the innovations of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature were metaphysical."[56] He therefore assumes

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54. Lewis Lancaster, "The Story of a Buddhist Hero: 道行般若經中之薩陀波倫故事," 1974, p. 86. For a more recent work illustrating the Sadāprarudita narrative, see Malcolm David Eckel, *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness*, 1992, pp. 18, 58-59, 80-81, 97-98.

55. For related discussion see Nancey R. Lethcoe, "Some Notes on the Relationship between the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, the Revised *Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikā*, and the Chinese Translations of the Unrevised *Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikā*," 1976, especially pp. 503-506.

56. Edward Conze, "The Composition of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā," 1952,

the so-called mythological passages/sections, especially those related to Buddha Akṣobhya, Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, etc., are later additions. There are obvious dangers in employing such presumptions when dealing with historical and textual development of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.[57]

In the end, Conze argues that the entire Sadāprarudita narrative was "added to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* centuries after its doctrines had been quite clearly formulated" (1978, p. 4). Whether the Sadāprarudita narrative as a whole goes back to the beginnings of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature remains in question. As a result Conze cannot successfully prove that Lamotte mistakes evidence of the spread of the *Prajñāpāramitā* as indication of its origins. Conze may be right in questioning Lamotte's thesis. Ironically, in the process of defending his theory of South India origin, Conze falls prey to the same mistakes which he accuses his colleague of making.[58]

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p. 254.

57. It is highly questionable whether the dichotomy between the metaphysical and the mythological is a suitable model for analyzing the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. Moreover, in the absence of the evidence of the socio-historical origins of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature it is difficult to imagine how the "original" innovations of this literature can be characterized as "metaphysical." The following sources provide additional discussion on how Western assumptions may lurk behind such analytical models as Conze's: Frank J. Hoffman, "'Orientalism' in Buddhology: Western Preunderstandings in Understanding Buddhism," 1996. See also Jan Nattier, "Buddhist Studies in the Post-Colonial Age," 1997.

58. In *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (1978, pp. 1-4), Conze does not seem to find it necessary to examine his own sources for a thesis of South India origin, even though he criticizes Lamotte for using such later materials as the Sadāprarudita chapter of the *Aṣṭa*. One might suggest that the references to Paramārtha (499-569 C.E.) (Conze 1978, p. 1), the *Kathāvatthu* (p. 1), Nāgārjuna (pp. 1-2), the *Mañjuśrīmūlatantra* (pp. 2-4), the *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (i.e., *T.* 1509) (p. 3), the *Blue Annals* (p. 4), etc., which lie behind Conze's thesis, are what should be subjected to rigorous scrutiny in order to determine how they may fit in with the "cradle" versus the "fortress and hearth" of Mahāyāna. In this respect, Conze's criticism of Lamotte's thesis does not make a strong

Drawing on evidence in the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras, Conze argues that Mahāyāna originated in South India. For example, he writes:

> The *Aṣṭa* (*A* x 225) states that 'after the passing away of the Tathāgata' the perfection of wisdom will 'proceed to the South', and from there spread first to the West, and then to the North. The different recensions of the Prajñāpāramitā, from the earliest onwards, as preserved in Chinese, all agree, with one exception, that the itinerary of the Prajñāpāramitā began in the South, or South-East. (Edward Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*, 1978, p. 2.)

Although there may be a range of meanings for the sense of direction within this scriptural passage, we have no thorough and consistent exploration of the subject on which to base an alternative understanding.[59] Therefore we will simply interpret indication of direction literally. Of particular interest is the way in which this prediction depicts the first stop on the itinerary of the *Prajñāpāramitā* after the passing away of the Tathāgata. All of our Sanskrit versions/recensions, as far as I know, use the verb *pracariṣyati/pracariṣyanti* (will proceed; will spread) to describe the appearance of the *Prajñāpāramitā*

point since he himself encounters the same difficulty with his own thesis of a South India origin, a difficulty for which he describes: "The evidence for the Southern origin of the Prajñāpāramitā is merely circumstantial, and by no means conclusive. . . . It is, we must admit, clearly speculative in that it [i.e., the evidence for the Southern origin of the Prajñāpāramitā] refers to a period antecedent to the one for which documents have survived" (pp. 3-4). Cf. footnote 34.

59. Étienne Lamotte, for example, suggests that the many directions, such as south, west, and north, mentioned in the scriptural passages are only symbolic of the prevalence of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. See his *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna*, vol. 1, 1944, pp. 25-26. However, Lamotte's suggestion is unclear because he does not provide criteria for determining when to take a reference as a symbol and when to take it as another mode of meanings, such as an index, a provisional designation, or reified existence. What is needed in this connection is a comprehensive interpretive scheme which on the one hand takes into account complex modes of meanings within scriptural references, and on the other hand applies such interpretations consistently.

at the first stop on this itinerary.[60] The Chinese translations, mostly using the term 至 (to proceed) or 流布 (to spread), communicate the notion that the *Prajñāpāramitā* began in an undefined place before heading to the South. This prediction says nothing about the "origin" of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. It is difficult to see how this prediction can be used to establish the locality of the origin of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

Toward an Unsettled Notion of Origin

Despite their best efforts to assign a concrete place to the origin of Mahāyāna, both Lamotte and Conze are undermined by their scriptural references which evade any traditional sense of origin. Further, both of their theories draw a tenuous equation between the assumed locality of the origin of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and that of Mahāyāna (Lamotte 1954, pp. 381-386; Conze 1978, pp. 1-4). Methodological differences between the two lead them to draw very different conclusions out of the body of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. In light of this problem I contribute two observations, one historical, the other textual, on the problems surrounding the study of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

First, our body of extant sources, shaped by historical accident, should not lead us to assume that Mahāyāna originated with the emergence of the

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60. *Aṣṭa-Mitra*, p. 225; *Aṣṭa-Wogihara*, p. 487; *Aṣṭa-Vaidya*, p. 112; *Pañca-Gilgit*, vol. 10(5), f. 157a2; *Pañca-Kimura*, 1990, p. 28.

Prajñāpāramitā literature. Our first historical glimpses of Mahāyāna are primarily afforded by the oldest Chinese translations of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. These translations may serve as indispensable evidence, both internal and external, for determining the locality of the spread of Mahāyāna. However, although the oldest Chinese translation of the *Aṣṭa* (*T.* 224) is the earliest of the extant Mahāyāna scriptures, we cannot automatically assume that the *T.* 224/*Aṣṭa*, or any other component of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, is necessarily the first Mahāyāna scripture. Therefore, it would be problematic for us to localize the origins of Mahāyāna on the basis of our historical understanding of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

Second, instead of following a literal interpretation of scriptural references to the places where the teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā* were demonstrated, we may need to open ourselves to a historical study of these references and the symbolism they may contain. For example, Hsüan-tsang's translation of the *Great Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (大般若波羅蜜多經, *T.* 220, vols. 5-7) in six hundred fascicles (*chüan*; 卷) consists of sixteen assemblies (會) which are said to have been held respectively on the Vulture Peak at Rājagṛha (1-6, 15), in Anāthapiṇḍada's Grove at Śrāvastī (7-9, 11-14), in the Abode of the Paranirmitavaśavartin Gods (10), and at the White Heron Pond in the Bamboo Grove at Rājagṛha (16). Taken at their face value, these references reveal information about the places where the teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā* were demonstrated. However, a strictly historical approach

that includes an understanding of the socio-historical background of both the emergence and development of the texts necessarily calls into question the authenticity of references to place, time, audience, direction, distance, etc. Scholars have made various attempts to sort out this socio-historical information and apply it to some of our interpretations of the sūtras. Yet no consistent methodology has been developed. For example, Hajime Nakamura rejects the face value of references to place, time, and audience (cf. *Indian Buddhism*, 1987, p. 154; "Mahayana Buddhism," 1987, p. 216), but at the same time uses almost the same information as a major criterion to distinguish earlier Mahāyāna sūtras from later ones (cf. *Indian Buddhism*, 1987, pp. 159-160). Similarly, in his discussion of "The Origins of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* in South India," Akira Hirakawa (*A History of Indian Buddhism*, 1990, pp. 253-254) at best maintains an ambivalent attitude toward the scriptural passages that predict the spread of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Such an inconsistency in dealing with scriptural passages is not uncommon among scholarly works (for example, cf. footnotes 10-11, 59).

Despite these problems both Conze and Lamotte enjoy prominent stature in the West as authorities on the "origins" of Mahāyāna. As a result of their preeminence many of their methodological oversights have become part of the unquestioned assumptions underlying the present day field of Buddhist studies. A recent example of such a phenomenon is Reginald Ray's *Buddhist*

Saints in India,[61] in which he seeks, among other things, to summarize scholarly works on the subject of the geographical origins of Mahāyāna, and also to approach this subject by tracing the role of Buddhist saints in Indian Buddhist history (1994, pp. 404-417). Ray, like many others,[62] does not question the appropriateness of the notion of origin in the study of Mahāyāna, nor does he critically assess the sources of evidence interpreted by Lamotte or Conze. For example, he writes:

> The following represent some of the evidence that scholars typically bring forward in support of southeastern origins. (1) A passage in the various *Prajñāpāramitās* says that the Mahāyāna teaching will originate in the south, will proceed to the east, and will finally travel to the north. (2) . . . (ibid., p. 405.)

In this passage he so thoroughly adopts Conze's theory that the notion of "will proceed/spread" as written in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature is subsumed by the phrase "will originate."

Alternative possibilities remain difficult to discern, largely because of the lack of definitively relevant evidence. However, by problematizing the analytical frameworks with which many of us began our study of early Mahāyāna, we can see more clearly many of the forces that have shaped our understandings of early Mahāyāna, especially concerning the date and

61. Cf. John S. Strong, "Review of *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations*, by Reginald A. Ray, 1994," 1996.

62. e.g., A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 2nd revised edition, 1980, p. 352; Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature (vol. II): Buddhist Literature and Jaina Literature*, revised edition, 1983, p. 301; Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*, 1987, p. 159; Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1989, p. 40; G. C. Pande, *Studies in Mahāyāna*, 1993, p. 31.

location of the socio-historical origins of Mahāyāna. We then may be able to come up with a different way of inquiring into the origins of Mahāyāna, and to see them in a new light.

Quite often our view of Mahāyāna results from forcing generalizations about the development of a tradition rich with many different dharmas and documents. The following chapter begins to establish guidelines for finding clarity within the great diversity of Mahāyāna documentary sources.



Chapter Six

THE DOCUMENTS OF EARLY MAHĀYĀNA: ESTABLISHING CRITERIA FOR THE APPLICABILITY OF TEXTUAL, EPIGRAPHICAL, AND VISUAL SOURCES WITHIN DOCUMENTARY DIVERSITY

Scholars inquiring into early Mahāyāna must develop criteria to assure that they select documents relevant to their pursuit. Without a schema that at least roughly distinguishes different categories such as the "origins of Mahāyāna," "early Mahāyāna," and "Mahāyāna," we have almost nothing on which to relevantly stake our arguments. In contrast to the large amount of scholarly interest in the origin-discourse on Mahāyāna, little work has focused on the crucially important issue of determining the boundaries of the "documents of early Mahāyāna."

For many scholars, an understanding of "early Mahāyāna" naturally grows first from linguistically diverse textual sources. These sources must be contextualized and studied critically in their particular linguistic, doctrinal, social, cultural, and historical settings. Yet to appreciate early Mahāyāna is

also to acknowledge that in early Mahāyāna, not unlike other religious traditions, textual sources make up only a part of the multifaceted phenomena under consideration. Different forms of Buddhist documents, be they emblems, images, inscriptions, or doctrinal texts, are all real documents in themselves conveying Buddhist practices and ideas of their time.[63] A thorough exploration of early Mahāyāna, therefore, must include a wide range of documentary mediums, and must be viewed through the appropriate academic tools -- philological, philosophical, anthropological, and sociological, to name but a few.

The principal point at issue here is that the emphasis on documentary diversity must not be done at the expense of documentary applicability: the documents to be included in our arguments must prove relevant. Although "early Mahāyāna" is the early phase of the Mahāyāna tradition as far as the time frame is concerned, the topic of "early Mahāyāna" is not the same as that of "Mahāyāna." Not all the documents relevant to "Mahāyāna" are applicable to the topic of "early Mahāyāna." It is obvious that a discussion of "early Mahāyāna" must focus primarily on the documents that can somehow be classified under this category. Without a mastery of the documents of this category, we can make no claims to understand the complexities of "early Mahāyāna." But how shall we go about handling the expression the

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63. Cf. John C. Huntington, "The Iconography and Iconology of Maitreya Images in Gandhara," 1984, p. 136; Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 1988, p. 404.

"documents of early Mahāyāna?"

The idea of "early Mahāyāna" arises mostly from comparisons made not to the "origins of Mahāyāna" but to Mahāyāna documents of later periods. We cannot definitively say how early the "early Mahāyāna" was in comparison with the "origins of Mahāyāna." Nor can we precisely talk about the "early Mahāyāna" itself, since we do not have an absolute point to refer to, be that point the first occurrence of Mahāyāna in Greater India or the origin of Mahāyāna. However, we can qualify "Mahāyāna" as belonging to some particular historical date, location, or provenance without referring to it as "early" in its absolute sense. We can conventionally and vaguely characterize Lokakṣema's translations as belonging to "early Mahāyāna," since they represent our earliest dateable evidence for Mahāyāna. A fifth century Mahāyāna document, for example, by comparison with the Lokakṣema texts, can thus be assigned to a later stage of Mahāyāna.

Equally important is that consideration of "early Mahāyāna" is basically limited to the "earliest surviving Mahāyāna documents;" we have little access to the "earliest Mahāyāna documents." One may as well assume that numerous documents in various mediums were produced within early Mahāyāna, although each medium tended to depict and convey messages with its own focus. A great many Indian Buddhist documents have been irretrievably damaged, destroyed, or lost. If one form of the extant Mahāyāna documents seems earlier than another by as many as several centuries, it is

very likely simply a matter of survival, not of any historical necessity.[64] Nevertheless, it would be inappropriate, or somewhat absurd, to take sixth century documents as direct evidence of early Mahāyāna, even though these documents are presently the earliest surviving Mahāyāna documents of their kind. Moreover, only with extreme care should one generalize about the history of Mahāyāna based on analysis of the extant Mahāyāna documents that have only fragmentarily survived.

As we approach these diverse documents we must bear a few additional considerations in mind. How do we assume there to be a chronology of early Mahāyāna which is consistent between visual, epigraphical, and scriptural evidence? The present approach attempts to divorce itself of generalizations about historical stages, and about levels of spiritual development, of Mahāyāna. Chapter Four discussed some of the problems surrounding doctrinal texts, especially the oldest extant Mahāyāna sūtras. The following chapters will consider particular issues relevant to epigraphical and visual forms.

As we begin to discuss our oldest Mahāyāna stone images or inscriptions we must look into the possibility of a series of changes over time in materials, styles, etc. behind our sources. Although stone images are our earliest

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64. Edward Conze ("Recent Progress in Buddhist Studies," 1967) expresses a similar idea: "If the Canon of one school only, that of the Theravadins, has reached us intact and in its entirety, this is not due to its greater antiquity or intrinsic merit, but to the accidents of historical transmission" (p. 4). See also K. R. Norman, "The Value of the Pāli Tradition," 1984, p. 6; Alex Wayman, "The Role of Art among the Buddhist Religieux," 1984, p. 288.

evidence, John Huntington argues that "stone is never the beginning of an image tradition,"[65] because "there had to have been an image tradition in wood, or other less permanent materials than stone. Such a tradition is the only way to account for the art-historically obvious long developmental period that had to pre-date any known stone images" (1989, p. 87). It is also hypothesized that less permanent materials were in a much larger quantity than were stone works.

This deliberation does not intend to fabricate new evidence of early Mahāyāna. Instead, the suggestion that a series of changes over time exists behind our oldest Mahāyāna stone images or inscriptions impacts how we view the term "early" in the expression the "documents of early Mahāyāna." In this setting, the term "early" will not be routinely treated as denoting a fixed period of time with distinct boundaries. Instead, when seen in light of an open-ended undertaking, this term serves simply as a loose and ever-changing chronological indicator and as a conceptual apparatus meant to help us to understand the dynamics which determined the boundaries of "early Mahāyāna." Even though we have no exact chronological markers for Mahāyāna itself, we can operate under an understanding of a wide range of documentary mediums that relate to early Mahāyāna. Within this framework scholars may gain important insights from the chronological sequence of our

65. John C. Huntington, "Mathurā Evidence for the Early Teachings of Mahāyāna," 1989, p. 86. Similarly, John C. Huntington, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 1985, p. 23.

sources and then look into the changes that may have occurred in the course of Mahāyāna's development.



Chapter Seven

A CRITIQUE OF SOME EPIGRAPHICAL MATERIALS RELATING TO EARLY MAHĀYĀNA

Epigraphical evidence sheds another light onto the scholarly inquiry into the history of Mahāyāna. When we explore the "origins of Mahāyāna," "early Mahāyāna," or "Mahāyāna" in general, it is important to evaluate how well a particular document addresses the time, location, topic, etc. This chapter will discuss the weighing of our few unquestionably Mahāyāna inscriptions as well as the problems in determining if Buddhist inscriptions are Mahāyāna or not. Unlike many other documentary mediums, epigraphical evidence expresses a relatively high degree of overlap between *yāna*s. As our epigraphical sources are relatively late, and under-emphasize the differences between *yāna*s, we find that these sources are less suitable for providing direct evidence on early Mahāyāna.

搽 The Identification of Mahāyāna Inscriptions

> As *primitive Mahāyāna* has been completely eradicated from the soil where it took roots, and as historical accounts of this outstandingly important development of Buddhism are virtually nonexistent, we have to rely mostly on (1) archaeological and epigraphical evidence and on (2) the huge mass of Mahāyāna scriptures of which the dating is extremely complex. We shall here try to combine the two approaches. (emphasis added) (Hubert Durt, "Bodhisattva and Layman in the Early Mahāyāna," 1991, p. 2.)

Durt asserts that scholars should mostly rely on archaeological and epigraphical evidence, and on Mahāyāna scriptures, to research into early Mahāyāna (note that his use of the term "primitive Mahāyāna" is a bit peculiar). Our first task is then to identify Mahāyāna inscriptions as distinct from other Buddhist inscriptions. Second, we must determine their applicability to the study of early Mahāyāna.

Compared with Chinese translations of doctrinal texts, the surviving references to the term "Mahāyāna" in Indian Buddhist epigraphs are not only extremely scarce but also late. Masao Shizutani, in his 1962 article, "Mahayana Inscriptions in the Gupta Period," writes: "We have some examples of Mahāyāna sculptures (e.g. Avalokiteśvara images) of the Kushāna period, but a single Mahāyāna inscription of the same period has not been found" (p. 47). Among the six Gupta "Mahāyāna inscriptions" that Shizutani examines, only one, which dates to 506 C.E., bears the title "Mahāyānika." Gregory Schopen remarks: "There are, as a matter of fact, at least fourteen inscriptions, ranging in date from the 6th to the 12th century in

which the Mahāyāna is referred to by name."[66] Therefore, we approach these Mahāyāna inscriptions as a highly valuable window to the later stages of Mahāyāna. As regards early Mahāyāna, we still lack any direct evidence from this period.

As noted, the study of early Mahāyāna must focus primarily on the earliest surviving Mahāyāna documents, which, regardless of their forms or languages, are all that remain of this period. The great majority of this kind of direct evidence happens to be the oldest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna scriptures. That these scriptures are indispensable for a thorough study of early Mahāyāna does not mean they have any privilege over later translations or over other forms of Mahāyāna documents for the study of Mahāyāna in general, or that of later stages of Mahāyāna. On the other hand, it would be an error to assume that a sixth century Mahāyāna inscription is a direct evidence of early Mahāyāna, even though it is presently the earliest surviving Mahāyāna inscription.

Aside from our scarce epigraphical sources we have a complete absence of surviving documentation about the everyday practices surrounding the related epigraphical activities. Therefore we can only rely on these inscriptions,

66. Gregory Schopen, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions," 1979, p. 1. Étienne Lamotte, in an oft-cited work published in 1970, points out that "the name Mahāyāna never occurs in inscriptions, but one finds the expression *mahāyānika-Śākyabhikṣu-ācāryya* in an inscription from East Bengal dated A.D. 507-8 and inscriptions of the Pāla period mention *mahāyāna-anuyāyin* 'followers of Mahāyāna'" (cited in J. W. de Jong, "Review of Étienne Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*)," 1979, p. 110).

mostly donative inscriptions, including the stone or images they were carved on, as our major epigraphical windows on Buddhism in India. For lack of information there is no guarantee of consistency between the practices and doctrines related to these inscriptions and those related to other forms of documents.

As proper documents, donative inscriptions are as real as doctrinal texts. In comparison with doctrinal texts, however, the messages in donative inscriptions are much more limited. Generally speaking, a donative inscription may contain the following elements: date (rare), the name and/or title of the donor, the name and/or title of the recipient of the donation (rare), the name of the related monastery, the name of the gift, and the votive formula.[67] The term "Mahāyāna," or some variant thereof, almost always appears only in the title of the donor or in that of the recipient of the donation, rather than in the votive formula. One can therefore identify the donor (or recipient) as a follower of Mahāyāna, but one will never know what the characteristics of Mahāyāna really are or whether there are any characteristics of Mahāyāna, since the term "Mahāyāna" is never defined in donative inscriptions. The lack of explanatory characterization for the term

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67. See O. Stein, "Formal Elements in Indian Inscriptions," 1933. There is a noticeable exception to the recording of a date in Indian inscriptions. Vidya Dehejia, for example, remarks: "Patrons at the Kushan centre of Mathura, between the first and third centuries AD, seem to have had a distinct sense of history; their inscriptions customarily state the day, month and year of the Kushan ruler in whose reign the gift was made" ("The Collective and Popular Basis of Early Buddhist Patronage: Sacred Monuments, 100 BC-AD 250," 1992, p. 42). See also Joanna G. Williams, "The Case of the Omitted Hundreds: Stylistic Development in Mathurā Sculpture of the Kuṣāṇa Period," 1989.

"Mahāyāna" and other technical terms vastly reduces the value of donative inscriptioins.

Looking for patterns of correlation by analyzing epigraphical data is one way to overcome the above shortcomings of relying on donative inscriptions to survey Mahāyāna. Nevertheless, statistical patterns are no substitutes for definition. For example, should extant inscriptions indicate certain followers of Mahāyāna used a specific type of formula, this would verify the connection between these followers and this particular type of formula. Methodologically, however, unless clearly stated in our internal evidence, it would require a vast leap of faith to maintain that this particular type of formula defines all of Mahāyāna or belongs invariably to Mahāyāna. It is possible that, in regular practice, followers of Mahāyāna, regardless of their *yāna* affiliation, pick their formulae simply by convention or out of personal concerns. Their formulae may be associated with Mahāyāna or any other *yāna*, or could possibly even devoid of any *yāna* connotation. Donative inscriptions, after all, do not define their technical terms, nor do they imply any injunction forbidding followers of Mahāyāna to use non-Mahāyāna votive formulae.

To summarize, the expression "Mahāyāna inscriptions" has acquired considerable currency in recent decades, spreading from art-historical theory to Buddhist forum. However, we must bear in mind here what we mean by this expression and to which period of time exactly we are referring. A total of about fourteen recognized "Mahāyāna inscriptions" are thus identified simply

because the title of the donor (or, rarely, that of the recipient of the donation) associated with these inscriptions contains the appellation "Mahāyāna" or its variant. This factor alone distinguishes them from other Buddhist inscriptions. Given that we do not know precisely how the donor qualified for the appellation "Mahāyāna," it is difficult to say with any certainty what exactly this appelation in these inscriptions meant. Finally, because these inscriptions date from the sixth to twelfth century we cannot draw conclusions about early Mahāyāna as if this were a direct evidence of that period.

雑 Votive Formulae and the Unexpected Lack of Distinction between Yānas

Some scholars, such as Masao Shizutani and Gregory Schopen, have attempted to associate those inscriptions that do not contain the appellation "Mahāyāna," or its indisputable variant, with the Mahāyāna tradition.[68] According to Schopen ("Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions," 1979), "there are as many as eighty inscriptions, dating from the 4th century on and having a wide geographical distribution, in which the Mahāyāna may be referred to under another name" (p. 1). Roughly speaking, he identifies this set of inscriptions

68. Masao Shizutani, "On the Śākyabhikṣu as Found in Indian Buddhistic Inscriptions," 1953 (in Japanese); "On Buddhism in Mathurā under Kushan Rule," 1953 (in Japanese); "Mahayana Inscriptions in the Gupta Period," 1962; *Guputa-Jidai Bukkyō Himei Mokuroku* (Catalogue of Buddhist Inscriptions in the Gupta Era), 1968; *Shoki Daijō Bukkyo no Seiritsu Katei* (The Process of the Origination of Early Mahāyāna), 1974, pp. 363-397; Gregory Schopen, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions," 1979; "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism," 1985; "The Inscription on the Kuṣān Image of Amitābha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India," 1987.

as Mahāyāna based on two criteria: the votive formula, and the title of the donor and/or recipient. These two lines of reasoning will be discussed in the present and following sections respectively.

First, many donors explicitly express, as evidenced in extant Indian Buddhist epigraphs, their intention of dedicating spiritual merit in their votive formulae and include the idea of transference of merit in one form or another. These votive foumulae, according to Schopen, can be grouped into two types, that of the Sectarian (*nikāya*) schools and that of the Mahāyāna tradition, each with a number of variations and exceptions.[69] We will return to the appropriateness of this grouping later. From what treads close to an essentialist perspective, Schopen claims that he has discerned a formula which is "both characteristic of, and specific to, the Mahāyāna" (1987, p. 120). This formula, with many minor variations, generally appears in one of the following expressions: "What here is the merit, may that, having placed my parents in the forefront, be for the obtaining of supreme knowledge by all beings;" "What here is the merit, may that be for the obtaining of supreme knowledge by my parents and all beings" (Schopen 1985, p. 42; cf. Cohen 1995b, pp. 12-14); or "may whatever merit there is in this be for the obtaining of the unexcelled knowledge by all living things" (Schopen 1985, p. 39; 1987, p.

69. In "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism" (1985, especially pp. 33-43), Schopen corrected a number of his statements on the votive formula made in his 1979 paper, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions." For details of the votive formula, please consult the works listed in footnote 68.

120). This type of formula, which is called "the 'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula" by Schopen (1987, pp. 99, 120), appears, as far as the surviving evidence shows, only after the 4th/5th century. Scholars have commonly referred to it as "a common Mahāyāna formula," "the usual Mahāyāna style," "of Mahāyāna origin," etc., of which Schopen (1979, pp. 4-7) is also well aware (cf. Cohen 1995b, p. 13).

Let us explore further the methodology for considering an epigraphical formulation to be from the Mahāyāna tradition. In his 1979 paper, Schopen raises some of the difficulties scholars may encounter in identifying any of the above formulations as common to Mahāyāna.[70] He contends that both the epigraphical and literary materials "express the same idea" (p. 7) of transference of merit despite the fact that the two sources use different technical terms. Since they both express the same idea, he argues that the epigraphical formula belongs to the same Mahāyāna tradition as demonstrated "in Mahāyāna literary sources which almost certainly pre-date

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70. The difficulties can be summarized as follows: (1) "No one, to our knowledge, who has asserted that our formula belongs specifically to the Mahāyāna, has ever given any evidence to support his assertion." (2) Although this formula is often found on images which are clearly Mahāyāna, it is found just as often on images which have no specific connection with Mahāyāna. (3) The idea of transference of merit is also found in both Pāli sources and non-Buddhist materials. (4) the technical terms used to express the idea of transference of merit in this formula are not those used to express the same idea in Mahāyāna literary sources. See Schopen 1979, pp. 7-8.

See also Schopen 1979, endnote 8, for a preliminary bibliography of the idea of merit transfer. Moreover, see Ryūkai Mano, "On the word Pariṇāma," 1980 (in Japanese); Yuichi Kajiyama, "Transfer and Transformation of Merits in Ralation to Emptiness," 1989; Y. Krishan, "*Puṇyadāna* or transference of merit -- a fiction," 1990; Toshifumi Kusaka, "The Development of Parinamana Thought," 1992 (in Japanese); Heinz Bechert, "Buddha-field and Transfer of Merit in a Theravāda Source," 1992; Minoru Hara, "Transfer of Merit in Hindu Literature and Religion," 1994.

any of our inscriptions" (p. 8). However he pays little scholarly attention to the study of these texts which are the foundation of his arguments. The reader will likely be perplexed by his ambivalent attitude toward the literary material. In brief, his analytical scheme and overall conclusion are designed to move away from an emphasis on the literary material, but here the most important piece of evidence to support his arguments rests on the literary material.

Examination of literary sources reveals that they do not express the same idea of transference of merit as epigraphical materials. Since Schopen (1979, p. 7) draws on a passage from the *Aṣṭa*, the present discussion will also focus on the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures. These scriptures make it abundantly clear that a preoccupation with merit transfer, as found in most inscriptions, should be transcended or discarded. Two important points of scriptural evidence support this idea. (1) In the *Aṣṭa*, merit transfer (or turning over; transformation; dedication; *pariṇāma*; *pariṇāmanā*; 迴向) often occurs side by side with rejoicing (or jubilation; *anumodanā*; 隨喜),[71] and thus appears roughly in the following formulation: "after having rejoiced, one turns it over into the utmost right and perfect enlightenment." However, this formulation, including its implied idea, almost never appears in the extant inscriptions. (2) The sixth chapter of the *Aṣṭa*, '*Anumodanā-pariṇāmanā-parivarta*,' is devoted

71. For a specific discussion of the term *anumodanā* see Nobuyuki Kashiwahara, "*anumodanā*," 1986 (in Japanese).

to the doctrine that without the help of the Perfection of Wisdom one cannot rightly perform *anumodanā-pariṇāmanā*. Should one lack the Perfection of Wisdom then one will settle down in (or adhere to; *abhiniviśate*; 執著) the process of *anumodanā-pariṇāmanā*, a process that "is not without poison, not without thorn. It is just as with food that seems excellent, but is really poisonous" (*PWETL*, p. 129). In other words, not every type of merit transfer is in conformity with the Perfection of Wisdom, and therefore not all instances of merit transfer are appropriate as far as the Perfection of Wisdom is concerned. The type of merit transfer that shows adherence (*abhiniveśa*) to merit transfer itself, for example, will never lead to any transcendent goal, such as the utmost right and perfect enlightenment, for although that very goal is explicitly expressed in the formula, this type of merit transfer is spoiled by poison (*tathā hy asya pariṇāmaḥ saviṣaḥ*).[72] On the other hand, if the *anumodanā-pariṇāmanā* is in accordance with the Perfection of Wisdom, its dedicatory formula typically reads: "Thus, I rejoice with the most excellent jubilation in the true nature of those dharmas, which are unbound, unfreed, unattached. Thereafter I turn that meritorious work founded on jubilation over into full enlightenment; but really no turning over takes place, because nothing is passed on, nothing destroyed" (*PWETL*, p. 133). A practitioner is

72. *Pañca-Kimura*, 1986, p. 136. To further clarify the idea under consideration, let me quote a passage from the *LSPW*, p. 278: "If, however, a follower of the great vehicle turns over these wholesome roots by way of a sign [*nimitta-yogena*; 以有相而為方便] and a basis [*upalambha-yogena*; 以有所得而為方便], then he turns them over wrongly; but the Buddhas and Lords do not praise the wrong turning over as the right turning over."

accordingly advised to pursue this right approach and to stay away from the poisonous *anumodanā-pariṇāmanā*.

Most epigraphical dedicatory formulae do not even contain the idea of nontoxic and toxic merit transfer. The *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures differentiate nontoxic from toxic merit transfer only in the context of the transcendent wisdom which requires, among other things, the realization of *śūnyatā* (devoidness; emptiness; 空) and of *an-upalambha* (lack of a basis of apprehension; 不可得). The following passage brings out more precise manifestations of this context concerning *anumodanā-pariṇāmanā*:

> *Maitreya*: This should not be taught or expounded in front of a Bodhisattva who has newly set out in the vehicle [*nava-yāna-samprasthita-bodhisattva*]. For he would lose that little faith, which is his, that little affection, serenity and respect which are his. In front of an irreversible Bodhisattva [*avinivartanīya-bodhisattva*] should this be taught and expounded. Alternatively, a Bodhisattva who is propped up by a good friend [*kalyāṇa-mitra-upastabdha-bodhisattva*] would thereby not be cowed, nor become stolid, nor cast down, nor depressed, would not turn his mind away from it, nor have his back broken, nor tremble, be frightened, be terrified. (*PWETL*, p. 126.)[73]

Outside this context those instances of toxic merit transfer described in the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures are not toxic any more, for the immediate goal of those at the level of common practice, such as what is normally shown in

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73. *T.* 220(4), vol. 7, p. 791b-c: 慈氏菩薩報善現言：如是所起隨喜迴向，不應對彼新學大乘菩薩前說。所以者何？彼聞如是隨喜迴向，所有信樂恭敬之心皆當隱沒。如是隨喜迴向之法，應為不退轉菩薩摩訶薩、或曾供養無量諸佛，久發大願，多植善根，為多善友所攝受者分別開示。所以者何？彼聞如是隨喜迴向，不驚、不怖、不退、不沒. See also and cf. *Aṣṭa-Wogihara*, pp. 335-336. Given the abundant textual sources, it is surprising that, to my knowledge, there has been very little scholarly attention to the idea of *anumodanā-pariṇāmanā* in Mahāyāna scriptures, whereas there have been lots of publications on the idea of merit transfer, and much more on Mahāyāna. Paul Williams (*Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1989, p. 208), ironically, makes no reference to any Mahāyāna scripture while acknowledging transference of merit as an important part of Mahāyāna. In my view the need for a thorough treatment of this particular idea in Mahāyāna scriptures cannot be overemphasized.

inscriptions, is not operatively to embark on any transcendent transformation, but to physically generate and, more often than not, turn over spiritual merit. The formula and idea of merit transfer in inscriptions do not have to be in exact agreement with those in Mahāyāna scriptures since, generally speaking, both sources function in different contexts with different immediate goals. One might also want to take into account such questions as different time frames, geographical diversity, and separate Buddhist transmissions. For these reasons, what is formulated about merit transfer in most Mahāyāna scriptures should not be taken as a primary criterion for scrutinizing or judging such a formulation in inscriptions. The assertion that "Mahāyāna" epigraphical and literary materials express the same idea of merit transfer appears to be mere conjecture.

Recognizing that we connot rely on clear parallels between epigraphical and literary materials, let us return to the problem of determining whether or not an epigraphical formula is indeed Mahāyāna. Unlike the title of the donor or the recipient, the extant epigraphical formula does not contain the term "Mahāyāna." Epigraphical references to the idea of merit transfer and some of the technical terms used to express this idea, although similar in name, may not necessarily have the same meaning as they do in Mahāyāna scriptures. Historically and methodologically these discrepancies do not make one formula less Mahāyāna than the other. However, one is not likely to find unequivocal references from external sources that confirm a solid definition of

"the 'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula."

Evaluation of inscriptions' internal evidence alludes any firm classification of their *yāna/vāda* affiliation. Buddhist inscriptions are overwhelmingly influenced by personal concerns. From among those formulations that Schopen (1985, pp. 41-42) classifies by "the 'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula," one finds various expressions of personal concerns, such as "having placed my parents in the forefront," or "may that be for the obtaining of supreme knowledge by my parents and all beings," which, to my knowledge, are almost totally absent from Indian Mahāyāna sūtras. The expression of personal concerns, which specifically singles out certain individuals as (part of) the intended beneficiaries of the donor's meritorious act of dedication, is also frequently practiced in inscriptions associated with non-Mahāyāna schools (*-vāda*). Vidya Dehejia and Richard Cohen call attention to collective patronage and cooperative donation, which, having been a common practice especially in early Buddhist art, can partly account for the existence of these personal concerns. An example of collective patronage may be shown as follows: "This gift, in the third year of Kanishka, was made primarily by the *bhikṣhu* Bala; joining him in his donation were his parents, masters, and teachers, followers and pupils, the nun Buddhamitra, the *satraps* (rulers) Vanaspara and Kharapallanara, together with the four classes, monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen."[74] Romila Thapar demonstrates

74. Vidya Dehejia, "The Collective and Popular Basis of Early Buddhist Patronage,"

that patrons see themselves in various ways and that the act of patronage links up many facets of society.[75] Akira Hirakawa also remarks: "The vast majority of the inscriptions concerning *stūpas* do not mention the name of a school."[76] In view of the above facts it should be fairly safe to say that, in general, Buddhist donative inscriptions were not intended to be the forum for declaring one's *yāna/vāda* affiliation or for expounding on anything with a distinct *yāna/vāda* accent. Instead, being at the level of common practice,

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1992, p. 43. In discussing various manifestations of collective patronage Dehejia writes: "Another distinguishing feature of the Kushan patrons is that they are not content with the simple statement that their gifts are *dānam* or *dēya dhamma*; instead their inscriptions enumerate the exact benefits they expect to derive from their donations. For instance, when the *bhikṣhu* Buddhavarman gifted a standing image of the Buddha, he specified that it was for the acquisition of knowledge by his teacher Sanghadasa, for the future welfare of his mother and father, for the lessening of all the griefs of Buddhavarman himself, and for the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings. This feature, it has been pointed out, is characteristic of the Mahayana creed" (p. 42). Whether the above feature is characteristic of Mahāyāna creed has just come under critical scrutiny; however, the phenomenon of collective patronage may in part account for the overwhelming personal concerns found in many Buddhist inscriptions. For an alternative, but related, discussion of the same evidence see Gregory Schopen, "On Monks, Nuns and 'Vulgar' Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism," 1988-89, especially pp. 159-162.

See also Richard S. Cohen, *Setting the Three Jewels: The Complex Culture of Buddhism at the Ajaṇṭā Caves*, Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1995, pp. 171-193.

75. "The patrons see themselves in various ways: as individual donors, as families making donations, or as a community of donors, whether as groups of *seṭṭhi-gahapatis* or *śrenis* or even members of a village, as for instance Kalavaira-gāma: as a community of worshippers but differentiating between *bhikkhus* (monks), *bhikkhunis* (nuns) and *upāsakas* and *upāsikās* (lay-followers), which would seem to cut across social identities or at any rate not make sharp distinctions: as a community of monks and nuns who have renounced social ties but whose donations still link them to such ties." (Romila Thapar, "Patronage and the Community," 1992, p. 27.)

76. Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, 1990, p. 273. In my view, this phenomenon alone should not be taken to prove that "there were other *stūpas* that were not affiliated with any of the schools of Nikāya Buddhism and that were managed by laymen," as Hirakawa did (p. 272). The fact that the name of a *yāna/vāda* was not recorded in a particular inscription tells us nothing whether its donor was affiliated with a *yāna/vāda*, nor does it suggest its donor must have been a layman/laywoman. This particular donor's *yāna/vāda* affiliation, if there was any, was simply not recorded. Of course it is possible that this particular donor did not belong to any *yāna/vāda*.

which involves no noticeable asceticism or transcendent progression, inscriptions are mainly used to address personal concerns and social expectations, which undoubtedly impelled most donors to the costly meritorious dedication. Since personal and social factors overwhelmingly determined epigraphical activities, regardless of the donor's *yāna/vāda* background, the preference for a certain formula thus seems to result from a complex set of interactive factors, such as convention, availability, and the like, rather than stringent *yāna/vāda* regulation. To put it succinctly, one should not overemphasize or wrongly infer the *yāna/vāda* affiliation because many other factors are simultaneously shaping the donative formula.

Even from such a condensed account, it is clear that a great many factors overshadow the epigraphical formula's *yāna/vāda* affiliation. Consequently, one cannot assume a direct correlation between a donor with a Mahāyāna title and the formulation of the votive formula he/she might use. Epigraphical sources and travelogs of Chinese Buddhist prigrims also indicate a very nebulous correlation between a donor with a non-Mahāyāna title and his/her votive formula. That the name of a certain *yāna/vāda* appears in the title of a donor is one thing; the identification of the votive formula therein as characteristic of this particular *yāna/vāda* is quite another. A careful researcher should not assume that in regular practice there is always a clear and distinct correlation between a follower of a certain *yāna/vāda* and an exclusive votive formula of this particular *yāna/vāda*. One can easily identify a

donor's *yāna/vāda* affiliation as long as the name of the *yāna/vāda* actually appears in his/her title. However, one cannot definitively identify the *yāna/vāda* attribution of a votive formula simply by resorting to the donor's title which contains the name of this particular *yāna/vāda*.

Schopen (1985) draws a distinction between votive formulae associated with non-Mahāyāna schools and what he calls "the 'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula." This argument is founded on and reinforces a presupposition that there is a clear and distinct correlation between the *yāna/vāda* to which a donor belongs and the type of the votive formula a donor would use. Not only his argument, but also the intellectual framework on which it rests, requires further discussion. Without going into too much detail, let me just point out three problems here: (1) Schopen bases his arguments on too small a pool of data; (2) donors do not always attach weight to their *yāna/vāda*; and (3) he overlooks areas of overlap or indistinguishability between non-Mahāyāna schools and Mahāyāna. I elaborate on these points below.

First, Schopen argues, "whenever the expression *sarvasatvahitasukhārtha* [for the welfare and happiness of all beings], or some variant thereof, occurs in any inscription which also contains the name of a school, that school is always a Hīnayāna school, and that the expression is never found in inscriptions associated with the group we now call the Mahāyāna" (1985, p. 36). This generalization, with one possible exception, is based on eleven instances in an

attempt to cover historical phenomena which extend over a period of roughly one thousand years in various parts of India. One of Schopen's generalizations with this kind of intent is based only on five instances (1985, p. 34). Richard Cohen points out:

> Unfortunately, Schopen's data is very problematic when it comes to fifth century Indian Buddhism, for he has only one inscription that uses both *Śākyabhikṣu* and Mahāyāna in this period, and Mahāyāna is not found epigraphically again until the ninth or tenth century. The polemic celebration of the Mahāyāna is evident throughout Mahāyānist treatises of this Ajaṇṭā's era and before. Why did the Mahāyānists wait so long to tell true names in their inscriptions? (*Setting the Three Jewels: The Complex Culture of Buddhism at the Ajaṇṭā Caves*, Ph.D. dissertation, 1995, pp. 254-255.)

Generalizations are not necessarily invalid just because they are based on only five or eleven instances. Instead, they are likely to be problematic. It seems Schopen never doubts whether his data is too scarce in comparison with the very large expanses of time and space to which he applies his generalizations. He says, for example, "it is a little surprising to note that almost the only places in which our ['classical' Mahāyāna] formula and its associated titles do not occur in inscriptions is in the south of India, Nāgārjunikoṇḍā, etc. and in the North-West, the two areas most often connected with the origin and development of Mahāyāna" (1979, p. 15). Such a statement may cause us to wonder if so many renowned Mahāyāna missionaries such as Lokakṣema, Kumārajīva, and their fellow companions ever existed.[77] And what about those travel accounts by Chinese Buddhist

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77. For a general paper which covers eminent Indian Buddhist missionaries who visited China, see Upendra Thakur, "Indian Buddhist Missionaries in Central Asia and

pilgrims concerning the presence of Mahāyāna? Most historical figures and their activities, after all, do not require epigraphs to prove their existence. Besides, a large portion of Buddhist epigraphs seem to have been lost in history.

The second area of concern is Schopen's interpretation of the expression "*sarvasatvahitasukhārtha*" (1985, p. 36) and how it reflects his assumption that most donors attached at least some noticeable weight to their *yāna/vāda* identity and consequently included the name of their *yāna/vāda* in their inscriptions. At least a dozen Indian Mahāyāna scriptures were translated into Chinese no later than the second half of the second century C.E., and a lot more were translated in the following centuries. Extant references to the term "Mahāyāna" in Indian Buddhist inscriptions all date after 500 C.E., and there are, in total, only about fourteen surviving instances of this kind. The lapse of more than three hundred years between our earliest translations of Mahāyāna scriptures and earliest inscriptions that make explicit reference to Mahāyāna affiliation suggests that, other than the factor of historical accident, the *yāna/vāda* identity was not always a significant factor in inscriptions. Especially in those first three hundred years it is apparent that many other factors, possibly convention, availability, collective patronage, etc., were working to influence votive formulae.

Finally, Schopen's generalizations about the expression

China," 1981. See also Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, "Biographical Notes on Indian Scholars who Worked in China," in his *India and China*, 1950.

"*sarvasatvahitasukhārtha*" create and reinforce rigid distinctions between the formulae and practices of different *yānas/vādas*. He asserts that this expression is distinctive of non-Mahāyāna schools and is never found in inscriptions associated with Mahāyāna. He offers no further discussion of this assertion's implications, nor does he incorporate it into his major analytical framework. Schopen for the most part overlooks another very valuable body of sources, the travelogs of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, especially Fa-hsien (法顯, d. ca. 422), Hsüan-tsang (玄奘, 600-664) and I-tsing (義淨, 635-713), all of whom spent many years in the Indian heartland of Buddhism and gained a deep understanding of India. Their descriptions of holy places privilege us with a unique look into Buddhist activities and communities on the Indian subcontinent. There can be little doubt that Chinese pilgrims' travelogs are inestimable treasures for Indian history and that no Buddhologist who deals with Indian Buddhist epigraphs from 400 C.E. onward can afford to be unaware of these treasures. What concerns us here is their reports on what may be called the "overlap" or "indistinguishability" between non-Mahāyāna schools and Mahāyāna. The travelogs reveal the ways Buddhist practice often experienced overlap across *yāna/vāda* affiliation. Fa-hsien reports that "there was a country named Pe-t'oo [毘荼], where Buddhism was very flourishing, and (the monks) studied both the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna [兼大小乘學]."[78]

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78. James Legge (tr.), *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 1965, p. 41. See also and cf. Samuel Beal (tr.), *Travels of Fah-hian and Sung-yun*, 1869, p. 51; *T.* 2085, vol. 51, p. 859a.

Similar references run throughout the travel accounts of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims. Hsüan-tsang, moreover, draws attention to the existence of "Mahāyāna-sthavira" (大乘上座部), whose members studied Mahāyāna while belonging to the Sthavira school.[79] I-tsing also notes that in many regions monks of the Sectarian schools and of the Mahāyāna tradition still lived together within the same monastery. Although together, their differences are described as "[t]hose who worship the Bodhisattvas and read the Mahāyāna Sūtras are called the Mahāyānists (the Great), while those who do not perform these are called the Hīnayānists (the Small)."[80] The above sources' accounts of areas of indistinguishability indicate that attributing a formula to a distinct *yāna* may be a forced and unfounded practice. For example, the expression "*sarvasatvahitasukhārtha*" (for the welfare and happiness of all beings), in and of itself, says nothing definitive about its *yāna/vāda* affiliation, and has long evaded a clear-cut association with one *yāna/vāda* rather than another. This expression may represent another area of overlap or

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79. e.g., Samuel Beal (tr.), *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, vol. II, 1884, p. 133; Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, vol. II, 1904-05, p. 138. For a general discussion of "Mahāyāna-sthavira" see Kyōgo Sasaki, "A Study of Mahāyāna-sthavira," 1964 (in Japanese). For a convenient summary of Hsüan-tsang's census figures of Buddhist yānas/schools see Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 1988, pp. 539-544.

80. J. Takakusu (tr.), *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago*, 1896, pp. 14-15. See also I-ching, *Chinese Monks in India*, 1986; David L. Snellgrove, "Multiple Features of the Buddhist Heritage," 1989, pp. 8-9. For a handy outline of the spread of and relationships between Buddhist yānas/schools as found in the travelogs of Fa-hsien, Hsüan-tsang and I-tsing, see Akira Hirakawa, *A Study of Early Mahāyāna Buddhism*, vol. II, 1990, pp. 357-380 (in Japanese).

indistinguishability between non-Mahāyāna schools and Mahāyāna. Consequently convention and availability may have been the factors leading to the association of this expression with non-Mahāyāna schools. Assigning the expression "*sarvasatvahitasukhārtha*" exclusively to non-Mahāyāna schools would contradict the following contention, also proposed by Schopen: one of the features which distinguish the Mahāyāna tradition from non-Mahāyāna schools is that the Mahāyāna formula "explicitly declares that the merit from the act undertaken is to be assigned to 'all beings'" (1985, p. 41).

Our discussion of the related scriptural sources, travel accounts of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, and inscriptions challenges the validity of a dedicatory formula which is "both characteristic of, and specific to, the Mahāyāna," as Schopen contends (1987, p. 120). This study presents the possibility that there is no solid distinction between the votive formulae associated with the Sectarian schools and what Schopen calls "the 'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula." In general, epigraphical sources, largely as a result of the context that created them, show little interest in expressing their *yāna* affiliation and we therefore should not try to mold them to fit our discourse on early Mahāyāna.

豁 Methodological Problems of Using the Title of the Donor as Grounds for Generalizing about Mahāyāna as a Unit

Up to this point we have focused only on how Schopen uses the so-called "'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula" to support his association of those inscriptions that do not explicitly use the appellation "Mahāyāna" with the Mahāyāna tradition. We may now pause to consider briefly his second line of reasoning, i.e., that which assumes a correlation based on the title of the donor and/or recipient (cf. Shizutani 1952, 1962; Schopen 1979, 1985, 1987; Cohen 1995a).

According to Schopen, of the forty-eight surviving inscriptions that contain both "the 'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula" and a title, "one has *upāsaka*, one has *bhadanta* (a reconstruction), one has *bhikṣu* (a doubtful case), two have *vihārasvāmin*, ten have *paramopāsaka/-opāsika*, and thirty-four have *śākyabhikṣu/-bhikṣuṇī*" (1979, p. 9). He emphasizes a high statistical correlation between his formula and instances of the epithet *śākyabhikṣu* (mendicant monk of the Śākya lineage) and then draws a number of conclusions, some of which concern the topic of early Mahāyāna or that of the origins of Mahāyāna.

Richard Cohen has examined the epithet *śākyabhikṣu*, paying special attention to its *yāna* status (1995a, pp. 191-270).

> This epithet has inspired three rather different interpretations. We have already encountered that of Gregory Schopen who, along with Masao Shizutani, believes this was a title Mahāyānist monks adopted for themselves. By contrast, D. C. Sircar [*Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, 1966] suggests that

> this epithet has no special significance, and is merely an alternate for *bhikṣu*, monk; this interpretation is also found in the common Sanskrit dictionaries. H. Sarkar [*Studies in Early Buddhist Architecture of India*, 1966] stands firm but alone in his opinion that the *Śākyabhikṣus* were an organization of peripatetic monks concerned with the dissemination of Buddha images, and the exaltation of Śākyamuni Buddha. However, upon a reexamination of these authors' evidence and arguments, I found the interpretations of all three to be wanting. (Richard Cohen 1995a, pp. 203-204; cf. Tilmann Vetter 1994, pp. 1252-1253.)

Despite its relative popularity in Indian Buddhist epigraphical documents, the epithet *śākyabhikṣu*, including *śākyabhikṣuṇī*, *śākya-upāsaka*, etc., is not of immediate institutional or doctrinal significace in Indian Buddhist literary sources, where the term *śākyaputrīya śramaṇa* is often found. Cohen deserves full credit for providing a background for the study of this topic. My attempt in this section is a critical review of Schopen's analysis, one that marks my departure from Cohen's work.

Schopen's survey of such epithets as *śākyabhikṣu* relies mostly on what he calls "the 'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula." Since the characterization of his formula as Mahāyāna is in doubt, as discussed above, his assertion that followers of Mahāyāna from the fourth century on can be identified through these epithets also comes into question, and requires further discussion.

Schopen develops the idea that certain titles are the property of specific groups. However, the reasoning behind his argument appears invested in creating distinctions based on assumed correlations between the title of the donor and group association. He notes that in inscriptions "the conjunction of *śākyabhikṣu* and Mahāyāna," such as *śākyabhikṣu-pravara-mahāyānayāyin*,

occurs three times, and that "the conjunction of *paramopāsaka/-opāsika* with Mahāyāna" occurs nine times (1979, p. 10). As evidenced in the title of the donor in the extant epigraphs this phenomenon occurs only after 500 C.E. After further discussion, he concludes that "the term *śākyabhikṣu/-bhikṣuṇī* must be a title used to designate a member of the Mahāyāna community who was also a member of a monastic community" and that the epithets *śākyabhikṣu/-bhikṣuṇī* and *paramopāsaka/-opāsika* "are the 'property' of a specific group," which "can only be the Mahāyāna" (p. 11). The term "Mahāyāna" in the compound under consideration simply allows us to ascertain a formula's *yāna* affiliation. The fact that these epithets appear in conjunction with the term "Mahāyāna" and other parts of the compound in the title does not make these epithets characteristic of Mahāyāna. For example, the term "Buddhist" in the compound "Mahāyāna-Buddhist" does not necessarily contain any connotation of Mahāyāna either. Therefore, it is obviously illogical to say that the term *śākyabhikṣu* signifies Mahāyāna simply because this term is joined by the term "Mahāyāna" in a compound.

An understanding of the epithet Śākya aids us in further looking into the *yāna* status of the term *śākyabhikṣu*. Shih Tao-an (釋道安, 312-385), almost in the same epoch as the earliest of the extant epigraphs in question, proposed the epithet Shih (釋; Śākya) to be the surname of all ordained members of the Saṃgha regardless of their nationality, sectarian affiliation, social status, and the like -- a proposal widely adopted not only in China but

also in Annam (*thich*), Korea (*sŏk*), and Japan (*shaku*).[81] The *Ekottarāgama* also attests to the practice of using the epithet *śākya* as a substitute surname. For example, it reads: "Just as, when rivers flow into the sea, they lose their respective names and distinct flavors, so the various clans, once they have left the household and entered upon the Path of the Buddha, become equally members of the Śākya clan" (*T.* 125, vol. 2, p. 658b-c; cited in Zenryū Tsukamoto, ibid., p. 722). Logically, historically and doctrinally, such epithets as *śākyabhikṣu* do not display any segmentary characteristics of the *yāna/vāda*. Instead, these epithets appear to be created and used in order to transgress or minimize the segmentation within the Buddhist tradition.

Schopen not only asserts "that the formula *yad atra puṇyaṃ*, etc., is virtually the exclusive property of the Mahāyāna" (1979, pp. 12, 14) but also repeatedly emphasizes that such epithets as *śākyabhikṣu* "are the 'property' of a specific group." Property can roughly be used in two ways in English. One is the material sense, such as the idea of intellectual property. The other connotes the idea of traits. (For example, water is a great resource because of its chemical properties.) Schopen is by no means clear in what sense he uses this term. One may question if he equally assigns his notion of property to all the other epithets, such as *bhikṣu*, *bhadanta*, *upāsaka*, which also appear in

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81. Cf. Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*, 1964, p. 100; Zenryū Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism: From Its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yüan*, vol. II, 1985, pp. 722-723, 930-931; Hubert Durt, "Bodhisattva and Layman in the Early Mahāyāna," 1991, p. 6.

the title. The idea of property does not seem to be a particularly useful tool for dealing with *yāna* distinction.

Further problems with Schopen's analytical framework may arise in his invention of a so-called "specific group," which he also refers to as "a single group" (1979, pp. 11, 14), "a separate and independent group" (p. 15). This invention shows that he makes totally ahistorical statements when he is in fact dealing with very complicated historical phenomena. A quest to delineate distinct characteristics of the *yāna* distinction all too easily leads to such a simplified invention. However, Indian history is often so intolerably convoluted and obscure that using the title of the donor to isolate a facet of the historical phenomena "from all parts of India, ranging in date from 4th/5th century to the 12th/13th century" (Schopen 1987, pp. 120-121) as "a separate and independent group" is simply a sweeping generalization. One wonders if one can deem all the other religious epithets in the title equally indicative of "a separate and independent group." Schopen's references to "a separate and independent group" etc. seem to ignore the complex web of factors that have had cross-cutting influences on a wide range of Buddhist epithets. To ignore the relationships and interconnections between these epithets is to ignore the history behind the development of Buddhism and, particularly, of Mahāyāna.

The degree of influence scriptural sources bear on Mahāyāna groups is one of the questions underlying the concern about the extent to which Buddhist

epithets are common characteristics of a grouping. Schopen's writings themselves seem to waver over the extent to which scriptural material influenced the lives of a group. For example he writes:

> that, although there was -- as we know from Chinese translations -- a large and early Mahāyāna literature, there was no early organized, independent, publically supported movement that it could have belonged to. (1987, p. 125; similarly, 1979, pp. 14-15.)

He interprets what he views as the lack of organized Mahāyāna practice as reason to devalue scriptural materials as simply ideals that had little influence on people. Yet in his article on the so-called "cult of the book" he presents an apparently contradictory opinion. He writes:

> it is reasonable to assume that the early Mahāyāna texts, being critical of established Buddhist orthodoxy (= the *Śrāvakas*), could not be taught or explained or kept in the usual monastic centers, and would require the development of separate centers which would be free of orthodox interference. . . . For the time being, we would like only to suggest that such *pṛthivīpradeśāḥ* may well have formed one of the 'institutional bases' (consciously leaving room for the very likely possibility of there having been more than one) out of which early Mahāyāna arose. ("The Phrase '*sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet*' in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the Book in Mahāyāna," 1975, p. 181.)

The significance of his argument here is not what he says about the "cult of the book" but his description of the complex and dynamic relationships between scriptural materials and the practices of various groups. His work appears to reflect an attitude that privileges epigraphical material over scriptural, textual, or other written materials. This grows out of his attitude that epigraphical evidence is the best portrayal of the actual practice of Buddhism. In contrast textual sources merely portray ideals to which many

aspired but few achieved. This weighing of documentary mediums explains why his conclusions appear to contradict concepts that are well established in the scriptures. Finally, one wonders about the suitableness of basing arguments on such interpretive categories as an "organized, independent, publically supported movement" for a meaningful exploration of the history of Indian Buddhism.

𑗘 Insights Gained from Epigraphical Evidence

How much weight do we assign our epigraphical evidence in the discourse on the dissemination of Mahāyāna on the Indian subcontinent? To consider this question, this chapter has reviewed the so-called extant Indian "Mahāyāna inscriptions" with special focus on Schopen's works on this topic. I am not proposing there are no Mahāyāna inscriptions. Surely, there are Mahāyāna inscriptions in the sense that they contain in the donor's title the term "Mahāyāna" or its variant. We should not treat the surviving inscriptions as if they actually were the entire body of inscriptions in ancient times. Since ancient Indian inscriptions, images, and the like, were quite often defaced, destroyed, or replaced by new ones from other religions, it is not entirely surprising that only about fourteen Mahāyāna inscriptions, all dating after 500 C.E., have come down to our hands. This set of inscriptions is too few to be indicative of "a separate and independent group" and is too late to be a direct evidence of early Mahāyāna.

Scholars hypothesize there is a second set of some one hundred surviving Mahāyāna inscriptions dating from the 4th/5th to 12th/13th century that do not contain the appellation "Mahāyāna" or its indisputable variant. The present study has shown that we cannot unequivocally identify pieces in this second set of inscriptions as Mahāyāna. Our endeavor is not to question the existence of Mahāyāna inscriptions but to identify Mahāyāna inscriptions. Scholars have not thus far adequately justified their methodology for characterizing epigraphical votive formulae as Mahāyāna. I am not saying there are no Mahāyāna inscriptions in this second set. My point is that one cannot unequivocally speak of Mahāyāna inscriptions in the sense that they contain a donative formula which is "both characteristic of, and specific to, the Mahāyāna." Moreover, scholars have not proved that such epithets as *śākyabhikṣu* can be taken as distinct epigraphical designations of members of the Mahāyāna tradition. Again the point is that we do not have any clear-cut criterion on the basis of the epithet to identify those engaged in this second set of inscriptions as members of Mahāyāna, although the existence of members of Mahāyāna in these inscriptions is possible. In sum, there is little or no basis for categorizing the second set of inscriptions as Mahāyāna. Although, indeed, these inscriptions are of inestimable value in and of themselves, and also constitute a momentous treasure for the study of Indian Buddhism, the extent to which we can apply them as relevant evidence for Mahāyāna in India is limited. Finally, because these inscriptions are so late,

they play little role in the discourse on the emergence of Mahāyāna.

Cohen summarizes Schopen's work as an effort "to document the Mahāyāna's emergence as a self-conscious institutional presence in India, defining and declaring itself publicly as a distinct entity through the unique epithets and formulae by which its members identified themselves epigraphically."[82] Here, Schopen effectively undercuts longstanding value of the oldest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna scriptures by framing as "ideal," in contrast to epigraphical sources which he deems "actual" (see footnotes 10-11). This emphasis on the relatively late body of epigraphical sources leads Schopen to maintain "that at Mathurā at least the movement we now call 'the Mahāyāna' had not yet achieved complete independence even as late as the second quarter of the 5th century A.D." (1987, p. 123). His assertion that "the emergence of the Mahāyāna at Mathurā, and almost everywhere else in India" was established "during the 5th/6th century"[83] is also besed on the same analytical strategy, one which seems to have enjoyed far-reaching influences.

Surprisingly little work presently undertakes to subject Schopen's analytical strategy to critical scrutiny. Is such an analytical qualification as "epigraphically documented" a valid and meaningful interpretation of the

82. Richard S. Cohen, "Discontended Categories: Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in Indian Buddhist History," 1995, p. 12.

83. Schopen 1987, p. 119. Ironically, whereas Schopen (especially 1985, 1991) recurrently complains that other scholars took little notice of archaeological or epigraphical materials in their studies of Buddhism, it seems to him perfectly all right to draw conclusions exclusively on the basis of donative inscriptions, or to put it simply, "epigraphically."

Mahāyāna tradition? As we approach the study of Mahāyāna we must foster an appropriate attitude toward epigraphical evidence. Never should we discount this documentary medium as inherently less meaningful than other forms of documentation. However, we cannot rely on our sources so heavily that we debase critical evidence from scriptural sources, travel accounts, etc. and presumptuously create such interpretive categories as "the 'classical' Mahāyāna donative formula" and "organized, independent, publically supported movement." By placing ourselves under the tyranny of just one form of documents we risk using an overly one-sided approach to historically complex phenomena. Such an analytical strategy, therefore, is not merely intellectually impoverished but historically negligent. For example, if instead one simply paid attention to Sanskrit textual materials, one would find that the emergence of Mahāyāna in Greater India cannot be documented in the form of Sanskrit manuscripts until the 6th/7th century, and that from its initial appearance onward the Mahāyāna tradition has remained almost completely negligible in Greater India as far as Sanskrit manuscripts are concerned. The 6th/7th century evidence to which I am referring is the corpus of Buddhist manuscripts found in Gilgit in the 1930s (see footnotes 13-14). I draw on this example to demonstrate the consequesces of this overly one-sided strategy in approaching early Mahāyāna. Resulting from this strategy is an overview of early Mahāyāna that represents no recognizable tradition.

Our extant Indian Buddhist inscriptions, while very important, should by

no means constitute our exclusive sources for the study of the history of Indian Mahāyāna. Schopen's apparent intent was to sort through the above-mentioned historical complexity and impose an analytical scheme for documenting "the Mahāyāna's emergence as a self-conscious institutional presence in India." However, he himself falls into the dangerous practice of over-reliance on a single form of documents. For example, his study of Mahāyāna's emergence does not include the oldest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna scriptures which make up significant historical instantiations of the Mahāyāna tradition. These scriptures have the potential to make powerful contributions to our understandings of texts, practices, doctrines, and social, cultural settings and processes. To fully appreciate these scriptures we must also develop a methodology for studying them, a task that remains a compelling problem after several decades of scholarship. Indeed, a full and proper exposition of early Mahāyāna requires consultation of these scriptures, as well as of other relevant documents.[84]

At present there are virtually no recognizable inscriptions that we can safely use to address early Mahāyāna, still less the origins of Mahāyāna. I should like to make a quick comment on Schopen's labeling of the engraved

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84. Alex Wayman and Elizabeth Rosen ("The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Inscriptional Evidence at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa," 1990) criticize Schopen for being so confined to epigraphical meterial, and argue: "First of all, it is not necessary to have epigraphical or art historical evidence to determine presence of a Buddhist movement, say the Mahāyāna" (p. 53). See also Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, 1990, p. 244; Tilmann Vetter, "On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Subsequent Introduction of *Prajñāpāramitā*," 1994, pp. 1254-1255.

pedestal of a non-surviving Amitābha image from Govindnagar/Mathurā (for references see the next chapter) as containing a "'proto-Mahāyāna' inscription" (1985, pp. 40-41; 1987, pp. 120-125). In the next chapter I will elaborate on a disparity between Schopen's assertion of the so-called proto-Mahāyāna inscription and Huntington's view of the image on which this inscription, dating ca. 104 C.E. (or 136±20 C.E.), was carved. For the time being, without going into detail, allow me to note that Schopen labels this inscription proto-Mahāyāna mainly because (1) it predates those inscriptions that contain his classical Mahāyāna donative formula, and (2) it "contains a formula which, although not the same, is almost certainly a forerunner to it or a prototype for it [i.e., his classical Mahāyāna donative formula]" (1987, p. 120). However, since his classical Mahāyāna donative formula is a hypothetical designation, it is problematic to label any inscription proto-Mahāyāna on the basis of this designation. The suggestion that it took about three centuries for the epigraphical tradition to evolve from this sole proto-Mahāyāna instance into his classical Mahāyāna donative formula does not seem to coincide well with the abundant early but highly elaborate scriptural materials. Further he offers no explanation why his classical Mahāyāna donative formula stopped evolving during its long and complex history.

Emphasis on *yāna* distinction and linear notions of development appear to have dominated Schopen's treatment of the Govindnagar inscription. Contrary to his construction of rigid distinction between *yāna*s, epigraphical

documents are among our primary sources that point to areas of overlap between *yānas*. In this case what a document does not say may be just as important as what it says. There is no reason to believe that every item in Buddhist manifestations should be indicative of the *yāna/vāda* distinction or should take sides in the *yāna/vāda* issue. Our discussion has shown that a large portion of inscriptions are simply indifferent to the matter of the *yāna/vāda*, for, among other things, their overall concern is centered on the creation and transference of merit.[85] A clarification of this point helps liberate us from the imposition of stereotypical *yāna* distinctions on our documentary mediums.

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85. Cf. Richard S. Cohen, *Setting the Three Jewels: The Complex Culture of Buddhism at the Ajaṇṭā Caves*, Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1995, p. 195; "Discontented Categories: Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in Indian Buddhist History," 1995. While referring to the Ajaṇṭā caves, Cohen remarks that "one may wonder whether the *yānas* are a useful or meaningful set of categories through which to describe and discuss these caves" (1995b, p. 7).



Chapter Eight

SELECTED VISUAL MATERIALS: PREPARING FOR A NEW LOOK AT THE THREE YĀNAS

Visual documents of Buddhism are perhaps one of most widely viewed symbols of Buddhism to the general public. The visual form represents a specific quality of the practices and beliefs of the people creating and using images of the Buddha and other Buddhist figures. The information a form contains is strongly influenced by its nature, limitations, and historical contingency in the process of transmission. As a unique form of documentation, the incorporation of visual sources into our study of Mahāyāna is essential for the creation of a holistic understanding of its early development.

Early iconic representations of the Buddha have commonly been associated with the Mahāyāna tradition. Many scholars theorize that textual references to images of the Buddha made during his lifetime are simply after-the-fact legends coined to justify the growing popularity of visual

representations in Mahāyāna. This chapter draws on textual references to early Buddha images to investigate how well their internal evidence fits into this theoretical framework. Further to draw out the problems in recent scholarship on visual documents I will focus on a specific Indian donative inscription which poses significant challenges to the *yāna* classification. Overall, this chapter's reflection on crucial issues in the study of Buddhist visual materials relating to early Mahāyāna prepares us for a more comprehensive understanding of the three *yāna*s.

灩 Aniconism and its Faulty Application to the Yāna Distinction

We begin by exploring the intriguing but extremely controversial problem of determining the exact time of the first occurrence of the Buddha image. The results of this investigation greatly impact the speculation of scholars of Buddhism on the emergence of Mahāyāna.

Scholars have long marked the end of the so-called aniconic (or pre-iconic) phase of Buddhist art in India with the first occurrence of the Buddha image. In this aniconic tradition the Buddha appears only through representative symbols or emblems such as footprints and the *bodhi* tree. According to Vidya Dehejia, an enthusiastic proponent of aniconism, "The term 'aniconic' carries the dictionary meaning of 'symbolizing without aiming at resemblance,' and 'aniconism' is defined as 'worship or veneration of an object that represents a

god without being an image of him'" ("Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," 1991, p. 45). The lack of an unmistakable Buddha image at early Buddhist sites prompts many scholars to advocate or accept the existence of an aniconic phase in early Buddhist art.

Running counter to theories on aniconism, both John and Susan Huntington argue that Buddha images could have been made within a generation of the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. They present their alternative as the "pageantry theory," which interprets most, if not all, of early narrative panels as "processional celebrations" or "re-enactments" by devout worshipers at sacred Buddhist sites following the lifetime of the Buddha, rather than as actual events in the life of the Buddha.[86] Although the Huntingtons insightfully question "the validity of the theory of aniconism as an all-embracing explanation for the art of early Buddhism" (Susan Huntington 1992, p. 111) and also propose an alternative viewpoint, their argumentation is weakened by their ambitious attempt to interpret almost all the narrative panels as instances of their pageantry theory. As Rob Linrothe demonstrates, there are "a number of narratives which are unlikely to be re-enactments" (1993, pp. 248-249). In short, their pageantry theory certainly has its

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86. See John C. Huntington, "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of *Buddhadarśanapuṇya*," 1985; Susan L. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, 1985, especially pp. 70-73, 98-100; "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," 1990; "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look," 1992. See also Karel R. van Kooij, "Remarks on Festivals and Altars in Early Buddhist Art," 1995. For a review of the Huntingtons' arguments see Rob Linrothe, "Inquiries into the Origin of the Buddha Image: A Review," 1993.

attractive aspects, but its explanatory power is vastly overestimated by them, just as is aniconic theory by thier opponents.

The pageantry theory is not our concern at present. Instead, what concerns us here is its attempt to problematize the application of aniconism to the *yāna* distinction. As Susan Huntington points out,

> one of the cornerstones of the aniconic theory has been that the early art reflected 'Hīnayāna' forms of Buddhism and that 'Hīnayāna' Buddhists had doctrinal proscriptions against the creation of works of art showing Buddhas in their human forms. Proponents of the theory have contended that the practice of creating anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha was initiated only when Mahāyāna Buddhism began to flourish around the early centuries of the Christian era.[87]

Since a number of early Mahāyāna doctrinal texts contain references to images and image visualization, and scholars have linked aniconism to the so-called Hīnayāna, inquiries into the origins of Mahāyāna are thus greatly influenced by theories about aniconism. Such an analytical framework determines the dating of the first appearances of Mahāyāna and the speculation on its earliest geographical locations and its defining characteristics.

The act of making anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha and

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87. Susan Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," 1990, p. 401. For related discussion see Y. Krishan, "Was Gandhāra Art a Product of Mahāyāna Buddhism?" 1964; Lewis Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images," 1974, p. 291; John Huntington, "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of *Buddhadarśanapuṇya*," 1985, especially pp. 25-29; "Mathurā Evidence for the Early Teachings of Mahāyāna," 1989, pp. 87-88; Susan Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, 1985, p. 70; "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look," 1992, pp. 117, 142; Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Art in Medieval China: the Ecclesiastical View," 1995, especially pp. 9-10.

worshiping them have been linked to devotionalism and contractual practices. The development of these practices is also tied into the increasing role of the laity, which, in turn, is widely regarded as one of the major contributing factors in the emergence of Mahāyāna. Giuseppe Tucci, in discussing "Buddha types: Mathura and Gandhara," theorizes:

> The transition from nonrepresentation to anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha need not have been caused by the sudden appearance of a foreign art type. More probably it was the result of new spiritual directions in Buddhism itself: increased emphasis on the laity, on devotionalism, the need for a savior; compounded by the political drive to reach new peoples accustomed to other religious forms. ("Buddhism," 1960, p. 682.)

Tucci's statement representes a broadly held hypothesis about the factors which contributed to the transition from aniconic to anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha.[88] Proponents theorize that the same trends that led to the evolution of a distinct Mahāyāna tradition are the same as those which spurred the appearance of anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha.

Based on the above theoretical framework, scholars have treated Mahāyāna and representations of the Buddha as deeply intertwined phenomenon. As Benjamin Rowland, Jr. flatly states:

> The anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha almost certainly went hand in hand with a change in the religion from the Hinayana to the Mahayana doctrine. (*The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 1963, p. 8.)[89]

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88. For example, the entire passage is recently quoted and echoed by F. R. Allchin, C. Fabrègues, "The Emergence of the Buddha Image," 1992, p. 47.

89. Similarly, Krishna Gairola, "Evolution of Buddhist Architecture and Sculpture in

Thus scholars have adopted early anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha as a window into the origins and essential nature of Mahāyāna. Heinrich Zimmer writes:

> So, too, are the vivid Buddhas of Mathurā; likewise the more numerous Buddhas of Gandhāra. The whole problem of the origin not only of the Buddha image but also of the Mahāyāna is enigmatically epitomized in the sudden emergence of these two constellations of related yet very different Buddha forms.
>
> The art of Bhārhut and Sāñcī, with its nonrepresentation of the savior, is Hīnayāna. (*The Art of Indian Asia*, vol. I, 1955, p. 339.)

The theories on the emergence of Mahāyāna is further backed by our continuing lack of physical evidence. Our earliest illustrative reliefs at Bhārhut, Sāñcī, Amarāvatī, Sārnāth, Bodh Gayā, Bhājā, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and other Buddhist sites roughly from the second century B.C.E. to the third century C.E. represent the Buddha mainly through symbols or emblems. Our earliest images of the Buddha date from at best the latter half of the first century B.C.E. This dating has been the primary evidence supporting the existence of an aniconic tradition. However, several scriptures translated in as early as 179 C.E. speak of making Buddha images. The *Ekottarāgama-sūtra* (增壹阿含經), translated into Chinese originally by the Tocharian śramaṇa Dharmanandi (曇摩難提：法喜) in 385, with a final redaction by the

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the time of Satavahanas," 1955, p. 47; Dietrich Seckel, *The Art of Buddhism*, 1968, pp. 171-175; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Origin of the Buddha Image*, 1972, p. 14; Trevor Ling, *The Buddha: Buddhist Civilization in India and Ceylon*, 1973, pp. 198-199; Kanchan Chakraberti, *Society, Religion and Art of the Kushāṇa India*, 1982, p. 73; Alex Wayman, "The Role of Art among the Buddhist Religiex," 1984, pp. 288-290; Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*, 1987, p. 154; Akira Hirakawa, *Daijō Bukkyō no Kyōri to Kyōdan* (The Doctrine and Order of Mahāyāna Buddhism), 1989, pp. 285-348; C. S. Upasak, *History of Buddhism in Afghanistan*, 1990, p. 40.

Kashmiri śramaṇa Gautama Saṅghadeva (瞿曇僧伽提婆) in 397 (see *T.* 125, vol. 2, pp. 705b-708c), is our earliest extant scripture that describes images of the Buddha actually produced during his lifetime.[90] Scholars have cited the late date of this document to argue that references to images of the Buddha made in his lifetime, but for which we have no other evidence, are simply legends coined for the purpose of justifying the increasingly frequent anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha.[91]

The suggestion that literary references to early representations of the Buddha are simply an after-the-fact justification for Mahāyāna practices grows out of a theoretical framework entrenched in defending the existence of an aniconic phase. Scholars of the above opinion wish to clearly distinguish between, first, aniconism, in which the Buddha is represented symbolically and such imagery is accompanied by a certain set of doctrinal and religious practices, and second, anthropomorphism, in which the Buddha's body is depicted and there is a stronger doctrinal and religious emphasis on the laity,

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90. The 佛說作佛形像經 (*T.* 692, Scripture on the Production of Buddha Images), translated toward the end of the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 C.E.) or shortly thereafter, includes King Udayana as a main figure and centers around the merit of making Buddha images, but does not refer to any Buddha image *actually* produced therein. Cf. Robert H. Sharf, "The Scripture on the Production of Buddha Images," 1996.

91. Prudence R. Myer ("Bodhisattvas and Buddhas: Early Buddhist Images from Mathurā," 1986) writes: "While Buddhist literature contains several references to images of Śākyamuni produced during his life or shortly after the Parinirvāṇa, most scholars agree that the 'invention of the Buddha image' took place shortly before the advent of the Kushānas and was stimulated by the rise of new attitudes and practices which called for images to receive the devotion of the faithful" (p. 130). See also Giuseppe Tucci 1960, p. 679; D. K. Sinha 1963, p. 78; Rob Linrothe 1993, p. 244.

devotionalism, and contractual practices. In this way they hope to reinforce the association between aniconism and Hīnayāna, anthropomorphism and Mahāyāna, and to strengthen the distinctions between these two groups. I suggest in this chapter that such efforts essentially distort the contents of our documentary sources.

🙞 The Overlap between Aniconic and Iconic "Phases"

As a case in point I would like to cite the following remarks of Hajime Nakamura.

> The first appearance of the Bodhisattva-idea must be placed between the beginning of the first century B.C. and the middle of the first century A.D., that is to say, after Bharhut sculptures and before the appearance of early Mahāyāna scriptures. The origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism must be placed in the time above mentioned or, roughly, immediately before or after Christ. (*Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*, 1987, p. 154.)

Nakamura's remarks appear to be backed up by his assertion that "[a]lmost at the same time as Mahāyāna originated, statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas came into existence" (ibid., p. 156). Such statements have carried particular influence in Japan, and worldwide as well. His remarks center around a notion of mutual exclusiveness in terms of chronology between the non-iconic phase and Mahāyāna.

Critical studies of early Indian Buddhist visual materials have only very recently begun to redress a history of serious misunderstandings. Art-historians have led a new investigation into the assumptions behind the theory of aniconism and its relation to the *yāna* distinction. The extant

narrative illustrations at early Buddhist sites, as a corollary, invite new interpretations.[92] Even Vidya Dehejia agrees that

> the oversimplistic assumption of a Hīnayāna phase which produced aniconic art, followed by a Mahāyāna phase which introduced the anthropomorphic icon, must be abandoned.[93]

Much of this recent revision among art-historians has significant implications for understanding early Mahāyāna in India. We still await a comprehensive study of early Mahāyāna which critically incorporates into doctrinal analysis both recent reinterpretations of early Buddhist visual materials and reexaminations of Buddhist epigraphs.

Although the existence of non-iconic representations of Buddhas at early Buddhist sites is beyond doubt, we cannot automatically assume the existence of an aniconic "phase" in early Buddhist art. Only under such clarity do we prepare for a well-integrated perspective on early Mahāyāna. To clarify this point, we account for two important issues: (1) the chronological sequence of appearance or lack of appearance of Buddha images, and (2) the documentation of early Buddha images. This section addresses the first issue; the second issue leads to the next section.

Like many other conventions, the chronology of the origins and the

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92. For extended discussion of narrative illustration in Buddhist art see Vidya Dehejia, "On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art," 1990; Julia K. Murray, "Buddhism and Early Narrative Illustration in China," 1995.

93. Vidya Dehejia, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," 1991, p. 47. See also p. 64. Dehejia used to hold the oversimplistic assumption which she is now abandoning. See, for example, Vidya Dehejia, *Early Buddhsit Rock Temples*, 1972, pp. 9, 148-185.

emergence of the non-iconic tradition is clouded in obscurity. As the tradition grew, non-iconic representations of Buddhas continued at Buddhist sites, especially Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, even after Buddha images had been prevalent in two notable but widely separated places, Mathurā and Gandhāra.[94] Elizabeth R. Stone's study of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa brings out more precise manifestations of this:

> In examining the *āyaka* panel of *Stūpa 3* (fig. 158) we see a loose parallel. The Birth and Seven Steps are represented aniconically, the Departure and Temptation iconically, and the First Sermon and *Parinirvāṇa* aniconically. One generally considers the development of early Buddhist narrative sculpture as a development from the aniconic imagery of Bharhut and Sāñcī to the iconic imagery of the Gupta narratives of the Sārnāth school. But the Buddhist art of Andhra Pradesh defies this developmental sequence. When we speak of aniconic art on the *āyaka* panel from Site 3, which belongs to the end of the third century A.D., we can no longer speak of the use of aniconic form as purely an archaism.[95]

Here the crucial feature picked up by Stone is that the appearance or lack of appearance of Buddha images does not bear chronological significance. The non-iconic tradition and the anthropomorphic tradition were not necessarily in two separate, sequential phases; they may have developed side by side as

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94. Cf. Giuseppe Tucci, "Buddhism," 1960, p. 682; David Snellgrove (ed.), *The Image of the Buddha*, 1978, pp. 27-28, 38-39; Robert Knox, *Amaravati: Buddhist Sculpture from the Great Stūpa*, 1992, cat.nos 28, 81, 82, 88; Elizabeth R. Stone, *The Buddhist Art of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa*, 1994. pp. 49-50, 64-65, figs. 100, 158, 188.

95. Elizabeth R. Stone, *The Buddhist Art of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa*, 1994. p. 64. She notes: "In general, the *stūpas* follow the well-known Andhra Pradesh conventions and consist of a dome resting on a round drum. Projecting from these drums are four platforms on each of the four axes. On each of these platforms is a row of five pillars referred to as *āyaka* pillars (*āyaka khambha*) in the inscriptions. The platforms have subsequently been called *āyaka* platforms" (ibid., p. 13). Nāgārjunakoṇḍa was one of the richest sources of Indian Buddhist art. Unfortunately it is now submerged at the bottom of the Nāgārjunasāgar Dam following large-scale excavations between 1954 and 1960.

suggested by their simultaneous manifestation on the very same panel on the stūpa from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. Under these conditions it is next to impossible to find clear evidence of a transition from the aniconic to anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha, not to mention a marker signaling the emergence of Mahāyāna.

As will be discussed in the next section, a number of literary sources state that Buddha images were first made during the Buddha's lifetime. The so-called after-the-fact justification, the major theoretical framework to repudiate our literary sources, only proves to be the result of scholars' unsupported intuitions. More importantly, because scriptural sources place minimal emphasis on the features that scholars consider characteristic of a distinct phase, their references do not support the existence of a distinct phase of anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha. The references do not place themselves in contradistinction to any previous phase such as the phase of non-iconic representation. In view of the references, the making or use of Buddha images plays such a minimal role that it cannot have made any major change in both the emphasis and the direction of Buddhist doctrines, practices, communities, and the like. We may conclude that our literary sources do not support the idea that Buddha images during their beginning years or early centuries were ever a defining characteristic of either non-Mahāyāna or Mahāyāna or used to initiate a new phase of development set in opposition to an antecedent non-iconic tradition.

Our literary sources do not assign Buddha images any feature characteristic indicating *yāna* distinction. According to a large body of archaeological and epigraphical sources, many followers of Sectarian schools were actively involved in the making or use of Buddha images. There appears to be no evidence to suggest a correlation of a phase of aniconism with Sectarian schools and another phase of anthropomorphic images of the Buddha with Mahāyāna. It can therefore be argued that the iconic/aniconic distinction is not of chronological or *yānic* significance, nor is it relevant to when, where or how Mahāyāna began. Consequently, those theories that heavily base themselves on this distinction for speculation on the origins of Mahāyāna or the date of Mahāyāna's first appearances become problematic.

In the following pages I briefly review our documentary sources of and about visual representations of the Buddha. Free of the burden of fitting our findings into an existing framework, we may investigate documentary sources to see if they really demonstrate (1) signs of a distinct transition in depicting the Buddha from a phase of nonrepresentation to that of anthropomorphic representation, and (2) evidence of doctrinal, religious, or artistic evolution that shaped the making or worshiping of Buddha images, including a noticeable change in the emphasis on the laity, devotionalism, and contractual practices. Finally, we will synthesize our findings through the study of a specific early Indian statue pedestal. Our conclusions from this exploration have the potential of greatly influencing our understanding of

Mahāyāna.

卍 Scriptural Contexts for the Documentation of Early Buddha Images

On the subject of the role of visual materials in early Buddhist religion, textual sources may not be as reliable as an actual visual image.[96] However, we can learn a lot from the doctrines and religious practices described in scriptures. There are many references to Buddha images made during the Buddha's lifetime. These include the famous sandalwood image commissioned by King Udayana of Kauśāmbī or King Prasenajit of Śrāvastī, and a painting made from the Buddha's shadow at the request of King Bimbisāra of Magadha. Our sources which contain these references are mostly doctrinal texts, historical works, and travel accounts.[97] Admittedly, none of these images to which our literary sources refer have come down to our hands.

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96. For extensive elaboration of the evidence for the earliest anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha see John C. Huntington, "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of *Buddhadarśanapuṇya*," 1985. Huntington's analysis here is not beyond criticism. For a review see Rob Linrothe, "Inquiries into the Origin of the Buddha Image: A Review," 1993, especially pp. 243-246. For related discussion see Prudence R. Myer, "Bodhisattvas and Buddhas: Early Buddhist Images from Mathurā," 1986; Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Art in Medieval China: the Ecclesiastical View," 1995, especially pp. 3-13.

97. Cf. Alexander C. Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*, 1959, pp. 259-273; Giuseppe Tucci, "Buddhism,"1960, p. 680; Umakant P. Shah, "Origin of the Buddha Image," 1965; Padmanabh S. Jaini, "On the Buddha Image," 1979; Chandra Wickramagamage, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 1984; V. V. S. Saibaba, "Probable Origins of Buddha-image as the Object of Devotion and Worship," 1989, pp. 11-12; Martha L. Carter, *The Mystery of the Udayana Buddha*, 1990; Robert H. Sharf, "The Scripture on the Production of Buddha Images," 1996.

The images carved into stone in the Swāt valley, Mathurā, Gandhāra, etc., dating from at best the latter half of the first century B.C.E., are our earliest sources but are still far removed in time from the Buddha's lifetime. Historical accidents of destruction and loss of material have played an enormous role in shaping the body of documentary and visual sources available to us today. Limiting our study to the earliest surviving stone images may be holding us hostage to chance and creating misleading simplicity. That this practice is still very much current can be seen in recent discussions of textual references to early Buddha images. Dismissing these textual references as nothing but fictitious legends, Erik Zürcher ("Buddhist Art in Medieval China: the Ecclesiastical View," 1995) wrote: "Obviously, these legends have no historical value whatsoever" (p. 4). But why? In his article in question, I can only locate one "explanation:"

> It is obvious that these traditions [of early Buddha images] are utterly unhistorical. So far no existing representation of the Buddha can be dated earlier than the first century AD, and the first reliable literary references to making and worshipping Buddha images occur in two archaic Chinese translations [of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*], both of which were completed in 179 AD. (ibid., p. 5.)

However, the fact that "no existing representation of the Buddha can be dated earlier than the first century AD" does not automatically lead to the conclusion that textual references to early Buddha images are "utterly unhistorical" or devoid of any "historical value whatsoever." This fact alone only conveys that at present we do not possess any non-textual evidence to verify the historicity of these references, or that, if one prefers, there is as yet

no archaeological support for these references' claims. Zürcher just would not admit that what appears "obvious" to him in this case is nothing but his own presumption which he takes as a given.

Most ancient Buddhist monuments and monasteries are either lost or in ruins, including the recent submersion of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, and it therefore comes as little surprise that none of the images reported to have been made during the Buddha's lifetime is known to have survived. Gaps in our visual evidence because of the reality of historical accident should not be the grounds for delegitimizing literary sources which refer to Buddha images made during his lifetime but that have not come into our hands. When Hsüan-tsang (玄奘, 600-664) visited Śrāvastī, the Jeta Grove (Jeta-vana) that Fa-hsien (法顯, d. ca. 422) had visited was in ruins "with the exception of one solitary brick building, which stands alone in the midst of the ruins, and contains an image of Buddha."[98] Because documentary sources have been and continue to be vulnerable to destruction, it is unreasonable to deny the possibility that images of the Buddha were created during his lifetime simply because none exist in our contemporary evidence. Therefore we should not approach our earliest surviving stone images as the outermost limit to our evidence on early Buddha images.

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98. *Si-yu-ki*, vol. II, p. 4. Although Hsüan-tsang deemed this image the same as the one commissioned by King Prasenajit, it is not so easy to confirm if this is really the case. John Huntington ("The Origin of the Buddha Image," 1985) asserts that Fa-hsien "describes a seated image; yet Hsuan Tsang's version of the Prasenajit copy of the Udayana image is a standing figure" (p. 33). However, Fa-hsien did not specify whether it was a seated image or a standing figure. See James Legge (tr.), *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 1965, p. 57.

The question for scholars then concerns how we will approach literary sources for the analysis of early Buddhist art. Let's not just dismiss our literary sources as the result of an after-the-fact justification before we have even examined individual contexts for the references. In considering literary documentation of early Buddha images we must seriously take into account the sources' contexts and diverse audience.

Several passages of the *Ekottarāgama-sūtra* (*T.* 125, vol. 2, especially pp. 705b-708c) give a detailed account of two images of the Buddha produced in his own lifetime. Alexander Soper (*Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*, 1959, pp. 259-263) wrote an English summary of these passages. His summary has been consulted by scholars, for example, Martha Carter, *The Mystery of the Udayana Buddha* (1990, pp. 6-7). In fact, more than just summarizing, his summary makes a lot of assertions about the after-the-fact invention, or "lateness" (1959, p. 260), of these sūtra-passages.

The above-mentioned passages of the *Ekottarāgama-sūtra* contain complex teachings about the multi-faceted experience of seeing the Buddha. If one sees these passages as nothing but formulae for practicing devotion, making images of the Buddha, and gaining merit (*puṇya*) by making images, then, to use a famous metaphor from the *Vajracchedikā*, one has missed the "raft." I suggest that in these passages the religious practice of making images of the Buddha and seeing the Buddha (*buddha-darśana*) are constructed around promoting the realization of *anitya* (impermanence),

anātman (non-self), and *śūnyatā* (devoidness; emptiness). Although these passages touch on many different practices, all practices in question are linked to the main subject: seeing the Buddha. Malcolm David Eckel elegantly espouses the depth and richness included in the act of seeing the Buddha as he writes:

> What does it mean to see the Buddha? This question confronts anyone who has looked at a physical image of the Buddha or heard a story of the Buddha's life and wondered how these images and stories have served Buddhists as sources of power or comfort, how they have taught a lesson of moral discipline or mental cultivation, or how they have challenged a person to peel away layers of illusion and look more deeply into the nature of reality. (*To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness*, 1992, p. 1.)

Images of the Buddha then become a lever not just to attract ordinary practices from various secular and religious figures but also to raise the act of seeing the Buddha itself to a level of deep awareness. It comes to represent one of the goals of the Buddha's teachings: looking more deeply into the nature of reality.

Passages of the *Ekottarāgama-sūtra* contain at least three categories of individuals concerned with the absence of the Buddha and the act of seeing the Buddha. The three different categories of individuals represent different motivations and levels of spiritual development. To each of these audiences this sūtra places various emphases on the act of making Buddha images or of seeing the Buddha. The sūtra describes a time when the Buddha ascended to the Trāyastriṃśa (Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods) to teach the Dharma to the gods and goddesses therein, and to his mother Māyā, who had been reborn

there. The first category of individuals are the five kings, their respective subjects, and roughly the four groups of the Buddhist community. Most prominent among these were King Udayana (or Udyāna; 優填王) and King Prasenajit (波斯匿王). Stricken with grief at the absence of the Buddha and longing to see him, they respectively commissioned the first two images of the Buddha ever made in the Jambudvīpa, one of "ox-head sandalwood" (牛頭栴檀 ; *go-śīrṣa-candana*), and the other of gold. The Buddha then descended to the Jambudvīpa at Sāṅkāsya (僧迦尸國), where he was greeted by our first category of individuals. The second category consists solely of Bhikṣuṇī Utpalavarṇā (優波華色比丘尼), known as the chief of the nuns possessing supernormal powers (*aggam iddhimantānam*; 神足第一). Subhūti (須菩提) makes up the third category of individuals concerned with the Buddha's absence and with seeing the Buddha. Commonly identified as being foremost of those dwelling in peace (*aggam araṇavihārīnam*; 無諍住第一) and of those worthy of gifts (*aggaṃ dakkhiṇeyyānam*; 應供養第一), he is the most eminent in these passages of the *Ekottarāgama-sūtra*.

Both Utpalavarṇā and Subhūti were not involved in making or worshiping Buddha images. They are included in these sūtra-passages mainly because they and our first category of individuals have at least one thing in common: seeing the Buddha. What concerns Utpalavarṇā most is not just to show up at Sāṅkāsya to see the Buddha but to become the first to see the Buddha in front of a big crowd. In contrast, when Subhūti learned of the Buddha's

descent to the Jambudvīpa, he was sewing his robes on the Vulture Peak Mountain (Gṛdhra-kūṭa-parvata; 耆闍崛山) in the city of Rāja-gṛha (羅閱城). Like many others, Subhūti thought about going to Sāṅkāsya. Immediately after he had risen from his seat, however, he wondered what made the form of the Tathāgata (如來形) to be seen by the masses, and then recalled a teaching of the Buddha in the follwing verses:

> Those who seek to pay homage to Buddhas and the most distinguished saints should contemplate all the [five] aggregates (陰; *skandha*), [eighteen] elements (持; *dhātu*), [twelve] sense-fields (入; *āyatana*), and [four] great elements (諸種; *mahā-bhūtānī*) as impermanent.
>
> Just as all these dharmas [i.e., aggregates, etc.] of Buddhas of the present are impermanent, so are those of Buddhas of the past and future.
>
> Those who seek to pay homage to Buddhas, including the past, future, and present ones, should contemplate the devoidness of dharmas.
>
> Those who seek to pay homage to Buddhas, including the past, future, and present ones, should direct their cultivation to realize non-self. (*T.* 125, vol. 2, p. 707c.)

Having thus contemplated, Subhūti came to more adequately realize the impermanence, non-self, and devoidness of all dharmas, especially those of the form of the Tathāgata. In the same manner, he eventually directed his mind to the conviction -- "I am now taking refuge in the aggregates of real dharmas (我今歸命真法之聚)" -- and then resumed sewing his robes.

Thereupon the Buddha made his spectacular descent to the Jambudvīpa. The five kings had gathered at Sāṅkāsya to greet the Buddha on his descent from the Trāyastriṃśa. Utpalavarṇā, somewhat obsessed with being physically the first to see the Buddha on his descent, startlingly transformed

herself into the form of a *cakravartin* (wheel-turner; universal monarch).[99] The five kings could not help but yield to this *cakravartin* despite their overwhelming eagerness to be the first to see the Buddha. Utpalavarṇā, saluting the Buddha's feet with her head, said to the Buddha:

> Homage to you, the most eminent one. Today, being able to become the first to greet and salute you, I am Bhikṣuṇī Utpalavarṇā, disciple of the Tathāgata.

Then the Buddha, in reply to Utpalavarṇā, uttered the following verses:

> Subhūti (善業) was the very first to pay homage, and none surpassed him in this regard. The essence of paying homage to Buddhas consists in the door to liberation through devoidness (空無解脱門; *śūnyatā-vimokṣa-mukha*).
>
> Those who seek to pay homage to Buddhas, including the future and past ones, should contemplate the devoidness of dharmas. This is the real meaning of paying homage to Buddhas. (ibid., p. 708a.)

In this way the Buddha tacitly chastised Utpalavarṇā for her abuse of supernormal powers. Instead, as Subhūti, she should contemplate the devoidness of dharmas while searching for the real meaning of paying homage to Buddhas.

In the course of the story King Udayana's concern for seeing the Buddha underwent a subtle shift. Initially, when the Buddha was absent from the Jambudvīpa, King Udayana was so deeply distressed that he claimed he would die if he could not see the Buddha (ibid., p. 706a). King Prasenajit also

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99. For further information on Bhikṣuṇī Utpalavarṇā see *T.* 99, vol. 2, pp. 73c, 169c, 326c-327a; *T.* 100, vol. 2, p. 454b-c; *T.* 125, vol. 2, pp. 558c, 562b; *T.* 126, vol. 2, p. 833c; *T.* 154, vol. 3, p. 100a; *T.* 198, vol. 4, pp. 181a, 185c; *T.* 310, vol. 11, p. 4a; *T.* 1509, vol. 25, p. 161a-b; *The Aṅguttara-nikāya*, vol. I, 1961, p. 25; G. P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, vol. I, 1974, pp. 418-421.

revealed strong feelings of piety toward the Buddha. It seems therefore that the making of the image of the Buddha grew out of sheer devotionalism, taken here to include the aspiration of the devotee to stand, directly or indirectly, in the presence of the sacred object of veneration without necessarily considering the profit that might be thereby rewarded. When the Buddha descended at Sāṅkāsya, King Udayana was holding his sandalwood image of the Buddha in his hand. King Udayana asked what merit one would gain from making images of the Buddha (作佛形像者 為得何等福) (ibid., p. 708b). In this context this sandalwood image appears to be an object of portable sanctity which was not rigidly fixed to a spot. With this question he reveals a shift in his motivation for making images of the Buddha. Yet King Udayana's interest in the promise or expectation that performing certain acts of merit would bear positive results in this or a future lifetime co-exists with his previous devotionalism. Thus, in regard to making images of the Buddha, devotionalism developed hand in hand with contractual practices. It is not so much that these two types of piety are mutually exclusive but rather we should assess them in terms of being dominant or not. King Udayana exemplifies a combination of both types and reveals how one can have one or more intentions in mind in performing acts of reverence.

The Buddha both elaborated on the rewards that could be obtained by making images of the Buddha and taught many other dharmas such as the four noble truths (*ārya-satya*). The practices and teachings referred to in the

narrative under study can be placed in a spectrum that extends from an ordinary contractual practice which lays particular stress on gaining merit to deep awareness which places primary emphasis on the appropriate realization of dharmas. The Buddha's absence from and descent to the Jambudvīpa were such important events that they caught the attention of a wide and diverse audience and communicated a spectrum of practices and teachings.

Different individuals and their practices are all integrated into the central theme: seeing the Buddha. This narrative successfully interweaves these individuals and their practices because it gives adequate attention to their respective concerns. Precisely through their diversity do the various characters draw out the richness of this narrative. However, in the end there is deliberate highlighting of the deep awareness of Subhūti, who is one of the most advanced of the disciples in both the *Āgama/Nikāya* and the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures.

According to another passage also in the *Ekottarāgama-sūtra* (*T.* 125, vol. 2, p. 674a-b), in which the Buddha addresses a company of Bhikṣus (monks; 諸比丘), there are five different ways of revering the Buddha, and five different kinds of merit that can be thereby obtained. Here, physically seeing the image of the Buddha/Tathāgata (見佛形像已：見如來形像已) is an occasion for doing further meritorious deeds such as "producing jubilation in one's mind" (發歡喜心) or "reciting three times the formula 'Homage to the Tathāgata, Arhat,

Samyaksaṃbuddha'" (三自稱號南無如來至真等正覺). Because this passage places such obvious emphasis on spiritual cultivation which accompanies seeing the image of the Buddha, it no longer seems appropriate to categorize this passage as representing the so-called after-the-fact justification simply because it speaks of Buddha images.[100] A company of Bhikṣus are said to have been involved in the Buddha's discourse on seeing the image of the Buddha, although there is no indication of who made or commissioned the image, what the material was, or whether these Bhikṣus actually saw the image. No Bhikṣuṇīs (nuns) or laymen are referred to here.

Lewis Lancaster (1974) uses scriptural sources to draw out the rich context that surrounds making images of the Buddha. His arguments center around two Chinese recensions of the *Aṣṭa*, one (*T.* 224) translated by Lokakṣema in 179 C.E. and the other (*T.* 225) by Chih Ch'ien between 222 and 229 C.E.[101] Each recension contains a passage concerning making and worshiping the image of the Buddha after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. This discourse between Bodhisattva Dharmôdgata and Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita on the image of the Buddha is incidental to the sūtra's

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100. Alexander C. Soper (*Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*, 1959) writes, "One other aspect of the lateness of the *Ekottarāgama* that helps to explain the Udyāna story is its occasionally shown interest in images" (p. 260). The presumption that equates showing interest in images with lateness is central to his study and, among other things, prevents him from looking into the individual contexts of his literary evidence.

101. Lewis R. Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images," 1974. Cf. John C. Huntington, "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of *Buddhadarśanapuṇya*," 1985, especially pp. 46-49.

primary concern for the tens of thousands of things leading up to the actual construction of the Buddha's body (成佛身). Among the tens of thousands of things, the practice of the Bodhisattva (菩薩之行) and a prior quest for Buddhahood (本索佛) are particularly important. For better understanding its main point, the sūtra gives a number of examples, one of which states that constructing the image of the Buddha (作佛形像；作佛像：成佛像) requires not only gold (the only material actually listed here) and skillful artisans but also the wish to render people the opportunity to obtain merit through their reverence for the image of the Buddha. The sūtra regards both the body and the image of the Buddha as manifestations of dependent co-arising (or conditioned co-production; *pratītya-samutpāda*) and hence of *śūnyatā*. One of the sūtra's primary themes then is the veneration of Buddha images as a means for understanding the dependent co-arising of the Buddha's body. When asked if the Buddha's spirit is in the image (「賢者！呼佛，神在像中耶？」；「賢者！謂佛，神在其像中耶？」), Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita replies, "No, it is not in its image" (*T.* 224, vol. 8, p. 476b-c; *T.* 225, vol. 8, p. 507a-b). The idea of gaining merit by worshiping Buddha images remains of marginal importance. The sūtra is primarily concerned with the practices, including image making, that are conducive to understanding the dependent co-arising of the Buddha's body. The so-called justification for an image tradition hardly appears to be its central concern. In addition, the appearance of references to Buddha images does not seem to carry any indication of other doctrinal shifts

such as an excessive emphasis on merit-making or devotionalism.

Two archaic Chinese recensions of the 般舟三昧經 (Banzhou sanmei jing; *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*), both attributed to Lokakṣema, speak of making the image of the Buddha (作佛形像, *T.* 417) (or, according to *T.* 418, 作佛形像若作畫, which is close to the Tibetan version, "having an image of the Tathāgata made, or even just having a picture painted") as one of a complex of factors leading to the 般舟三昧 (*samādhi* of direct encounter with the Buddhas of the present).[102]

I have attempted to highlight several scriptural references to early Buddha images (*T.* 125, vol. 2, pp. 674a-b, 705b-708c; *T.* 224, vol. 8, p. 476b-c; *T.* 225, vol. 8, p. 507a-b; *T.* 417, vol. 13, p. 899c; *T.* 418, vol. 13, p. 906a) because they are among the oldest extant passages that refer to Buddha images. Because of the lack of solid evidence of the history prior to the translation of our scriptural references into Chinese, any attempt at determining how early they must have first appeared in Greater India would only be speculative. There are many other textual sources (cf. footnote 90), but because of considerations of space, a full discussion will have to be reserved for a later study.

In summary, while devotionalism and contractual practices occupy

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102. *T.* 417, vol. 13, p. 899c; *T.* 418, vol. 13, p. 906a. Cf. Hisao Inagaki (tr.), "Pan-chou-san-mei-ching 般舟三昧經 (Translation with notes)," 1989, p. 63; Paul Harrison, *The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present: An Annotated English Translation of the Tibetan Version of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra*, 1990, p. 46.

significant aspects of specific passages in the *Ekottarāgama-sūtra* (*T.* 125, vol. 2, pp. 705b-708c), they are only part of a wide spectrum of diverse practices and teachings. Pursuit of the real meaning of seeing the Buddha is the common theme that ties this narrative together. This integrated understanding of our literary sources challenges the common view that textual documentation may have all resulted from later attempts to justify the practice of representing the Buddha's physical form. Because there is no evidence of a doctrinal shift accompanying all of our scriptural references to early Buddha images, there appears to be little basis for suggesting these documents were created simply as an after-the-fact justification for a cult object, an image tradition, or for the evolution of Mahāyāna practices. It is very possible that these referred images symbolize areas of overlap between the *yāna*. We can correct our previously deficient understanding of literary references to early Buddha images by retaining a place of primary importance for contextual analysis of the references themselves. So too can we review our understanding of early Mahāyāna when, among other things, we give appropriate attention to the issue of aniconism and its faulty application to the *yāna* distinction.

𝌆 An Example: A Statue Pedestal of Buddha Amitābha

It is not always easy to come up with distinct attributes to identify the image at early Buddhist sites as the Buddha/Bodhisattva image.[103] Even if one illustrates how a specific image could be identified as depicting the Buddha/Bodhisattva, it is never a simple task to establish which *yāna* it was, for the Bodhisattva and, of course, the Buddha are known to both Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna traditions.[104] The presence of the image of the Buddha/Bodhisattva alone should not be a determining criterion for associating the image with one *yāna* or another.

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103. For a detailed discussion of why the earliest extant images of the Buddha from early Kuṣān Mathurā were inscribed "Bodhisattva" or its variant, see Ju-hyung Rhi, "From Bodhisattva to Buddha: The Beginning of Iconic Representation in Buddhist Art," 1994.

Concerning the difficulties in identifying the early image an interesting example can be found from originally pairs of male figures on the inner faces of the upright pillars of each of the four stone gateways (*toraṇa*) at Stūpa I (Great Stūpa), Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh, India (ca. 2nd-3rd decade 1st century C.E.). Manjushree Rao (*Sanchi Sculptures*, 1994, pp. 65-66, plates 27-29), for instance, has somehow identified these figures as gods of the Four Great Kings (*cātur-mahā-rājikā devā*), i.e., Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Virūpākṣa, Vaiśravaṇa, etc. However, according to Susan Huntington (*The Art of Ancient India*, 1985), "Usually, these pairs of figures are identified as *dvārapālas* (door guardians). . . . While they are probably correctly interpreted as attendant figures, their precise identification is uncertain. One possibility is that these figures are bodhisattvas, or prototypes of the bodhisattvas identifiable later in Indic art" (pp. 96-97). On the basis of the evidence presently available, probably no one can say anything conclusive about these figures. I am grateful to Professor Joanna G. Williams for bringing this example to my attention and for her helpful discussions on this subject.

104. Space limitations do not provide the opportunity to discuss this topic, which has been dealt with by many scholars. See Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, 1932, reprint by Motilal Banarsidass 1970; Walpola Rahula, "The Bodhisattva Ideal in Theravāda and Mahāyāna," 1978; Leslie S. Kawamura (ed.), *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism*, 1981; Yuichi Kajiyama, "On the Meanings of the Words *Bodhisattva* and *Mahāsattva* in Prajñāpāramitā Literature," 1982; Y. Krishan, "The Origin and Development of the Bodhisattva Doctrine," 1984; Luis O. Gómez, "From the Extraordinary to the Ordinary: Images of the Bodhisattva in East Asia," 1987; Hajime Nakamura, "The Career of the Bodhisattva," 1987; Donald S. Lopez, Jr., "Sanctification on the Bodhisattva Path," 1988.

To highlight the problems associated with determining the *yāna* affiliation of the image of Buddhas other than Buddha Śākyamuni, especially those of an early date, this section considers a specific example. Our focus is on an inscribed pedestal base of a lost standing image of Buddha Amitābha (immeasurable light, said to preside over the Buddha-realm of Sukhāvatī (possessed of happiness)). This statue pedestal was dedicated in the 26th year of King Huviṣka (ca. 104 or 136±20 C.E.) and recovered from Govindnagar (in the Mathurā region in north-central India) in 1977.[105] This statue pedestal is our oldest extant archaeological evidence to document the presence of the tradition of Buddha Amitābha and is further significant because it is located in the Indian heartland. Because of its early date and geographical location this statue pedestal is extremely pertinent to a reexamination of the early development of Mahāyāna in India, in particular the tradition of Buddha Amitābha.

There is a general consensus that the tradition of Buddha Amitābha belongs to the domain of Mahāyāna. However, from a historical point of view we lack definitive information concerning historical periods, geographical locations, and advocating individuals of this tradition during its beginning

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105. For recent studies of this inscribed image pedestal see Gritli von Mitterwallner, *Kuṣāṇa Coins and Kuṣāṇa Sculptures from Mathurā*, 1986, pp. 73-74; Gregory Schopen, "The Inscription on the Kuṣān Image of Amitābha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India," 1987; John Huntington, "Mathurā Evidence for the Early Teachings of Mahāyāna," 1989; Akira Sadakata, "Japanese Translation of Mathurā Inscriptions (II)," 1990, pp. 124-125 (in Japanese); R. C. Sharma, *The Splendour of Mathurā: Art and Museum*, 1994, pp. 142-143.

years. Given that the earliest period of this tradition is obscure and its relationships to early Mahāyāna ambiguous, scholars have expressed various opinions about the "origins" of this tradition. Most of such opinions have been brought together by Kōtatsu Fujita, *Genshi Jōdo shisō no kenkyū* (A Study of Early Pure Land Buddhism, 1970, especially pp. 261-286). Fujita divides these opinions into two broad groups, one suggesting sources outside India, especially Zoroastrianism, and the other pointing to sources inside India, such as the Vedic pantheon or early Buddhist mythology. Intriguing as these two groups of opinions may all appear, according to Fujita, none of them is either devoid of speculations or capable of explaining the dynamics of the projected origins. The present work attempts not to survey the historical development of the tradition of Buddha Amitābha, nor will it deal with scholars' opinions about the origins of this tradition. Limitations of space only make it possible for a brief discussion of Fujita's approach.

In a recently published article with an attempt to provide a general presentation of the so-called Pure Land Buddhism, Fujita is certainly aware of the Govindnagar pedestal ("Pure Land Buddhism in India," 1996, pp. 9, 38-39). Instead of utilizing the Govindnagar pedestal as evidence for his main arguments, however, he simply remains content with the perspectives established back to his 1970 work. This appears a bit inadequate in light of his claim to draw on diverse materials, including historical, textual, philological, and archaeological. To gain some sense of how his arguments are

formulated it is useful to examine the way in which he deliberates on the geographical origin of Pure Land ideas.

> Concerning the geographical origin of the Pure Land sutras, various facts can be garnered from the history of the Chinese translations of Buddhist texts. The list of translators and places of their origin shows that the majority came from Northern India or Central Asia. The transliterations of foreign terms in the older Chinese translations reveal that the original text might have been in Gāndhārī or a Prākrit dialect akin to it. . . . Gāndhārī was the Northwestern Prākrit language used in Northwest India and Central Asia from the third century B.C.E. to third century C.E. All of these facts point to Northwest India as the place of origin of Pure Land thought and Central Asia as the region to which it spread. ("Pure Land Buddhism in India," 1996, p. 10.)

Chapter Five discussed some of the issues surrounding the geographical origins of Mahāyāna. It is here worth noting that Fujita makes no reference to the Govindnagar pedestal in his discourse on the geographical origin of Pure Land ideas. However, the problem is not his excessive reliance on scriptural sources, a reliance which he himself also admits (ibid., pp. 6, 8-12, 31). Rather, it is his inference of geographical origin from scriptural sources that seems inappropriate. Let us now reexamine the passage quoted above, since it constitutes the foundation of his interpretation. Fujita deduces that both the translators of the group of scriptures relating to Pure Land and the transliterations of foreign terms in these translated scriptures "point to Northwest India as the place of origin of Pure Land thought." In my view they do no such thing. An analogous example to illustrate the problem with his inference can be suggested as follows. Suppose that most English translators of classical texts of the Confucian tradition were from Taiwan and China's southeast provinces, and that the transliterations in these translated texts

appeared akin to dialects of these regions, nonetheless probably no one would infer that Confucianism originated in these regions.

Let us then turn to the Govindnagar pedestal and explore what kind of information it might contribute to our understanding of the tradition of Buddha Amitābha and Mahāyāna. The tradition of Buddha Amitābha could have originated in the Govindnagar/Mathurā region, and hence in north-central India, just as it could have originated in many other regions too. We must not overlook the limitations of this pedestal in determining this tradition's geographical origins. One cannot legitimately infer from this pedestal that this tradition actually originated in the Govindnagar/Mathurā region, for this pedestal, just like many extant scriptural sources, is but an instance of sporadic appearances relating to this tradition. Because of its earliness, however, this pedestal deserves to be taken seriously, and undoubtedly poses a serious challenge to the hypotheses which ascribe this tradition's geographical origins to the northwest of India or outside of India. For example, on the basis of the Chinese translations of the scriptures that contain either Pure Land ideas or references to Buddha Amitābha, Fujita maintains that Pure Land thought originated between 100 and 150 C.E. (1970, pp. 222-238, 257; 1996, p. 10). Since the Govindnagar pedestal dates from roughly the equivalent time period of 104 or 136±20 C.E., it potentially contradicts Fujita's theories on the date and geographical origin of Pure Land thought.

Most significantly, the Govindnagar pedestal's inscription explicitly refers to the image as Buddha Amitābha but does not explicitly state any *yāna* affiliation (cf. Gregory Schopen 1987, pp. 110-111; R. C. Sharma 1994, pp. 142-143). On the basis of literary sources, the tradition of Buddha Amitābha is generally regarded as a branch of Mahāyāna. While it is possible that the Govindnagar image of Buddha Amitābha belongs to Mahāyāna, we cannot automatically assume that this image, other images of Buddha Amitābha, and our literary sources of the tradition of Buddha Amitābha convey the same meanings of Mahāyāna. It is possible that the tradition of Buddha Amitābha has not always been an essential element of Mahāyāna. It is also possible that the tradition of Buddha Amitābha in India at one time was a part of the Buddhist religion in general. The Govindnagar inscription reveals in great detail that this image was commissioned by Nāgarakṣita, a wealthy man from a mercantile family background. However, there is no way of telling to which *yāna* Nāgarakṣita belonged or whether the *yāna* affiliation ever concerned him. Therefore statements in the dedicatory formula such as "an image of the Blessed One, the Buddha Amitābha was set up for the worship of all *buddhas*" and that "[t]hrough this root of merit (may) all living things (obtain) the unexcelled knowledge of a *buddha*" (Schopen 1987, p. 111; cf. Sharma 1994, pp. 142-143) demand that we look to their context to understand them.

Because of its ambiguous *yāna* affiliation and potential significance to our

understanding of early Mahāyāna, scholars have studied the dedicatory formula of the Govindnagar inscription and arrived at a diversity of scholarly opinion. Based on his interpretation of the inscribed epigraph, Gregory Schopen classifies it as an early "'proto-Mahāyāna' inscription" (1985, pp. 40-41; 1987, pp. 120-125). John Huntington, however, views this pedestal as documentation of early Mahāyāna largely because of its unambiguous reference to Buddha Amitābha. He backs up his theory by arguing that the Mathurā school of sculpture, including this pedestal, "contains virtually nothing but fully developed image conventions" (1989, p. 86). The differing theoretical frameworks for the development of early Mahāyāna explain the divergence between Schopen and Huntington.

As he does with the epigraphs discussed in the previous chapter (pp. 118-120), Schopen bases his proto-Mahāyāna classification of the inscription on his classical Mahāyāna donative formula theory, a framework which rests on his conceptualization of the distinct and linear stages that make up Mahāyāna's development. The inscription on the Govindnagar pedestal resists the constraints that Schopen's framework attempts to impose on it in many ways. It is by no means clear for what reason Mahāyāna's development would follow the distinct and linear stages conceptualized by him throughout its history. Even though his article on this pedestal consists of as many as thirty nine pages (1987, pp. 99-137), his overwhelming concern to relate his arguments to his classical Mahāyāna donative formula leads him not to

wrestle with many fundamental features of this pedestal. For example, an important question is whether or not one can sensibly classify a dedicatory formula containing the statement that "an image of the Blessed One, the Buddha Amitābha was set up for the worship of all *buddhas*" (Schopen 1987, p. 111) as an early proto-Mahāyāna inscription. We must first interpret an inscription in its own context. The Govindnagar inscription preserves a rare epigraphical reference to Buddha Amitābha, and also expresses the idea of installing this image of Buddha Amitābha for the veneration of all Buddhas. These two features, among other things, make up this inscription's constituent elements. Schopen's classification does not take into account the above-noted constituent elements in his framework. Instead, he simply bases his classification of the inscription as proto-Mahāyāna on his classical Mahāyāna donative formula theory. This methodology appears to reflect the attitude that it is the Govindnagar inscription's responsibility to fit itself into Schopen's framework, rather than his responsibility to formulate a theory which takes into account the constituent elements of this inscription.

Huntington also uses the Govindnagar pedestal to theorize on the development of early Mahāyāna. Because this pedestal contains an unambiguous reference to Buddha Amitābha, he views it as "attested documentation of early Mahāyāna," and emphasizes that it "will do much to inform us of the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism" (1989, p. 91). Further, based on what appears to be a well developed material and carving technique, he

contests that this pedestal is part of a fairly actualized image tradition. In particular, he remarks that its inscription "contains several advanced features of the [Sukhāvatī] cult" (1989, p. 86). Whether one can infer a "cult of Sukhāvatī" from this inscription is questionable, for, as Schopen points out, it refers to Buddha Amitābha without mentioning Sukhāvatī.[106] However, since Huntington maintains that this pedestal contains advanced features of the tradition of Buddha Amitābha which, in turn, he assumes to belong to Mahāyāna, his view of this pedestal would therefore indicate anything but "proto-Mahāyāna."

In the end both Schopen and Huntington appear to be unsuccessfully compensating for an unavoidable truth: we cannot with certainty discern the Govindnagar pedestal's *yāna* classification. The donor of this pedestal did not consider his *yāna* affiliation, if any, significant enough to include in the donative inscription.

In its capacity as a non-specifically Mahāyāna document, the Govindnagar pedestal presents an interesting challenge to our study of early Mahāyāna. Schopen and Huntington base their attempts at *yāna* classification of this pedestal on their understanding of what constitute the essential characteristics of early Mahāyāna. That Schopen and Huntington arrive at fundamentally different *yāna* classifications reveals that there remains much

106. Gregory Schopen, "The Inscription on the Kuṣān Image of Amitābha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India," 1987, especially pp. 115-116. Also see his "Sukhāvatī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature," 1977.

scholarly contention around what makes up early Mahāyāna. The Govindnagar pedestal raises this problem through its stubborn resistance to *yāna* classification. This tells us that in the first half of the second century C.E. Buddha Amitābha was explicitly referred to while no demonstrable connection with any *yāna/vāda* was made. In other words, the practices relating to Buddha Amitābha do not have to appear as sectarian phenomena. Accordingly, those who invariably see the *yāna/vāda* distinction/conflict as a decisive factor in the history of Indian Buddhism in the second or even first century C.E. may have formed a block to the real understanding of the history in question.[107]

彝 The Possibility of Earlier Traditions prior to the Oldest Extant Buddha/Bodhisattva Images

The Govindnagar pedestal itself suggests a chronological aspect of its own. In this section, I investigate the plausibility of the contention that earlier traditions must have existed behind not only this pedestal but the oldest extant Buddha/Bodhisattva images. This question represents another disparity between Schopen and Huntington, and also has significant implications for understanding early Mahāyāna through early Buddhist art. To inquire into the possibility of earlier traditions is one thing, but to classify

107. The wide range of topics and opinions concerning a sectarian approach to Indian Buddhism with special emphasis on early Mahāyāna cannot be considered here. Stephen A. Kent, "A Sectarian Interpretation of the Rise of Mahayana" (1982) offers probably the most typical instance of this approach.

earlier traditions according to *yāna* distinction is quite another. This study by no means intends to suggest that there is a so-called pre-Mahāyāna or proto-Mahāyāna form of Buddhist art. Instead, I have demonstrated that it is particularly inadvisable to impose such labels as pre-Mahāyāna or proto-Mahāyāna while analyzing early Buddhist scriptures, inscriptions, or images with non-specific *yāna* affiliation.

Both John and Susan Huntington argue for a strong likelihood that Buddha images were made, at the latest, within a generation of the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. In particular, they draw our attention to the possibility of earlier traditions behind the oldest extant Buddha/Bodhisattva images, extensively discussing this possibility with abundant references to other scholars. The Huntingtons theorize that the making of images in easily perishable or relatively precious materials preceded what has come into our hands as evidence of an advanced image tradition.[108] In this way the Huntingtons invite the reader to consider the conceivable developments of both image

108. In order to avoid making things too complicated, I should like to restrict myself to citing only four of the most striking points of assuming earlier traditions proposed by the Huntingtons. (1) "It is patently clear that no image could be made before the concept behind it existed" (John Huntington 1989, p. 87). (2) "[T]he Mathurā school of sculpture," including the Govindnagar pedestal, "contains virtually nothing but fully developed image conventions" (John Huntington 1989, p. 86). Cf. Susan Huntington 1985, pp. 150-159. (3) "[S]tone is never the beginning of an image tradition. The making of stone sculpture was vastly more expensive than paintings or wood carvings." (John Huntington 1989, p. 86). He goes on to remark: "Thus, it must be assumed that the teachings demonstrated by any particular iconographic form found in stone images had become established over a sufficient period of time to draw the attention of the wealthy patron who was attracted by their efficacy and good reputation" (idem). Cf. Susan Huntington 1985, p. 627. (4) "Earlier [Buddha/Bodhisattva] images, perhaps made of easily perishable materials, such as wood or ivory, or precious materials, such as gold or other metals that could be melted down, may have been created but are now lost" (Susan Huntington 1985, p. 627).

conventions and various materials behind the oldest extant Buddha/Bodhisattva images and connect them with their respective ideas and teachings. Here I want to use the issues which the Huntingtons raise as a starting point for our exploration of the ideas and doctrines surrounding the Govindnagar pedestal.

Has any religious image ever been made without some ideas or doctrines? Some teachings must have influenced the donor or artisan in the first half of the second century C.E. to install a statue of Buddha Amitābha rather than that of any other figure. Luckily, the Govindnagar inscription renders much valuable information. For our purposes in the present discussion this inscription contains three distinct features: a reference to Buddha Amitābha, the idea of installing this image of Buddha Amitābha for the veneration of all Buddhas, and the intention that "[t]hrough this root of merit (may) all living things (obtain) the unexcelled knowledge of a *buddha*" (Schopen 1987, p. 111; cf. Sharma 1994, pp. 142-143).

In the Govindnagar inscription we see a rather mature combination of three distinct features referred to above. Each of the three features may have taken a certain amount of time to develop, and a combination of these features would certainly require a much longer period to mature than a single feature. In particular, a certain set of doctrinal or religious practices associated with Buddha Amitābha must accompany the reference to Buddha Amitābha, the first feature. The second feature must presuppose the

existence of the idea of venerating all Buddhas, and the third feature the idea that all living things may eventually obtain the unexcelled knowledge of a Buddha. It would therefore be inadequate to consider this inscription apart from the complex interrelations among these features. Needless to say, we cannot infer from this inscription that prior to the Govindnagar image there was a long standing tradition of Buddha images. Nevertheless, this inscription reflects a more ancient stage of development for the above ideas which undeniably make the Govindnagar image and its inscription possible. There is no way of telling whether these ideas have exactly the same meanings as those found in related doctrinal texts known to us. This uncertainty is partly because of the lack of information about the date at which people associated with epigraphical activities first put together these ideas and the precise manner in which these ideas were put into practice. Again there is no need to impose any *yāna* affiliation on the Govindnagar inscription. The ideas contained in this inscription could have come from a variety of Buddhist traditions and may be usable for many but not necessarily all Buddhists. More importantly, these ideas suggest a chronology in which each of them developed individually over a considerable time and still later joined together as finally manifested in this very inscription.

Another approach in modern scholarship which limits the topic of early Buddha/Bodhisattva images to nothing but the earliest surviving stone images has shaped the study of the Govindnagar pedestal. For example, this

is one of the goals of Gregory Schopen in attempting to refute John Huntington's suggestion of "any long standing *Buddhist* tradition of monumental cult images in a medium other than stone." Schopen writes:

> Surely if there had been a prior tradition of any standing of Buddhist cult images in wood or clay, the stone images that we have would not still be borrowing so heavily from non-Buddhist models. The fact that our earliest extant monumental cult images in stone represent a tradition still groping for its own types and iconography, still working with non-Buddhist models, virtually precludes any long standing development of *Buddhist* cult images in clay or wood. The monumental cult images we have in stone from Sārnāth, Śrāvastī, etc., are probably the earliest that there were. ("On Monks, Nuns and 'Vulgar' Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism," 1988-89, p. 166.)

It has long been suggested that the earliest surviving stone images of the Buddha/Bodhisattva owed their styles to indigenous traditions of *yakṣa*, *mahāyogin*, or royal imagery.[109] The Huntingtons are also well aware of this suggestion of stylistic resemblance.[110] Other scholars have sought to demonstrate that this resemblance may not appear as obvious as is often

109. Pratapaditya Pal ("The Buddha Image in India," 1984), for example, remarks: "Gandhara artists modified Greco-Roman images of Apollo and deified Roman emperors with certain Indianized features, while Mathura artists portrayed him as a yogi with an idealized body" (p. 147). Cf. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, 1928-31, reprint by Munshiram Manoharlal 1971, part I, pp. 8, 29, 41; Giuseppe Tucci, "Buddhism," 1960, p. 682; David Snellgrove (ed.), *The Image of the Buddha*, 1978, pp. 46-58. See also Rob Linrothe, "Inquiries into the Origin of the Buddha Image: A Review," 1993, especially pp. 246-247, in which Schopen's assertions quoted above are uncritically accepted.

110. See John Huntington's brief discussion of "the *yakṣa* convention" and "king type" in his 1985 article, "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of *Buddhadarśanapuṇya*," p. 23. See also Susan Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, 1985, pp. 150-159. While commenting on a certain resemblance between the so-called "*Bhikṣu* Bala's Bodhisattva/Buddha image at Sārnāth" and the "*yakṣa* figures and *caurī* bearers of Maurya- and Śuṅga-period art," Susan Huntington writes, "such visual associations were an important focus of Coomaraswamy's thesis that images of Buddhas were derived from a strictly Indic source" (ibid., pp. 151-152).

suggested.[111] Because ancient Buddhist sources are full of references to *yakṣas*, *mahāyogins*, and kings, it is doubtful if these indigenous factors were, in real life, regarded as "non-Buddhist models," as Schopen asserts in the above quote.

Indigenous factors and royal power did not uncommonly influence the taste and production of artifacts, not only in ancient India, but also throughout the many countries and ethnic groups in the long history of Buddhism. For example, probably no observer of Chinese Buddhist art can fail to notice the phenomenally sinicized images at Yün-gang (雲岡) and Long-mên (龍門), China, where native elements, the court, etc. respectively or collectively played a certain role in the process of gradual adjustment and reorientation.[112] It is now widely recognized that indigenous factors, among other things, continue to exert their influences on and at the same time make their contributions to Buddhist art in their respective countries or ethnic groups even after their traditions of Buddhist art have long been established. Buddhist art, ancient and modern, is connected to practices of everyday life, including indigenous practices. In light of this connection it seems odd that Schopen insists that the indication of stylistic resemblance between the earliest surviving stone

111. J. C. Harle, *The Art and Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent* (1994 (first published 1986 by Penguin Books), pp. 62-70) offers recent example of such work.

112. Cf. Peter C. Swann, *Chinese Monumental Art*, 1963, pp. 74-123; Dietrich Seckel, *The Art of Buddhism*, 1968, pp. 81-92; William Watson, *Art of Dynastic China*, 1981, pp. 131-146; Robert E. Fisher, *Buddhist Art and Architecture*, 1993, pp. 86-95. For an alternative, but related, discussion see John C. Huntington, "The Iconography and Iconology of the 'Tan Yao' Caves at Yungang," 1986.

images of the Buddha/Bodhisattva and indigenous traditions of *yakṣa*, *mahāyogin*, or royal imagery "virtually precludes any long standing development of *Buddhist* cult images in clay or wood," as quoted above.

Our discussion shows that Schopen fails to establish, in his own words, that "[t]he monumental cult images we have in stone from Sārnāth, Śrāvastī, etc., are probably the earliest that there were" (idem). This counter to Schopen's arguments quoted above does not suppose to prove that a long standing development of Buddha/Bodhisattva images in a medium other than stone actually preceded the earliest surviving stone images of the Buddha/Bodhisattva. The following section will summarize the present discourse concerning such a development and explain its ramifications for our understanding of Mahāyāna.

恭 Toward an Accurate and Usable Past

So far our earliest surviving images of the Buddha/Bodhisattva are those carved into stone in the Swāt valley, Mathurā, Gandhāra, etc., dated to the latter half of the first century B.C.E. at the earliest. My primary concern has been to investigate the question of whether there were earlier traditions prior to the aforementioned stone images. As I studied literary sources for an answer to this question, I analyzed a number of references to Buddha images either produced during the Buddha's lifetime or discussed by the Buddha. While drawing heavily on literary sources, especially those translated into

Chinese in as early as 179 C.E., I also searched for evidence supporting the idea that references to early Buddha images are simply the so-called after-the-fact justification, the major criticism used to repudiate our literary sources. In particular, I stressed the need to demystify the latent assumptions behind this theory that the making of Buddha images was the result of the overwhelming trend toward devotionalism and/or contractual practices. This misconception has formed a major obstacle in the way of a pertinent understanding of our literary sources, and except that it is easy to apply and therefore unduly popular, there is no good reason why anyone should feel bound by it. This is to say not that we should indiscriminately regard all of our literary sources as factual documentation but rather that an understanding of our literary sources must grow first from contextualized studies of their particular settings. Only thereafter will one have a solid research in any full sense that opens up the possibility of moving toward a more accurate and usable past.[113]

To highlight some of the contradictions to the after-the-fact justification theory I then turned my focus to the Govindnagar pedestal. It is difficult to discern how the stone images relate to the literary sources now available. The ideas or teachings associated with the stone images are not always so near the surface. It would nontheless be inadequate to ignore the process by which

113. For an insightful analysis of the question "what is an accurate and usable past good for," see Rita M. Gross, *Buddhism after Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism*, 1993, pp. 17-27.

the ideas, latent or manifest, came into existence both concomitant with and prior to the stone images. The Govindnagar inscription preserves an important record of this process and suggests a vastly more complex history regarding the ideas behind its image than what one would normally imagine. It is only through insight into this process that we can devise an adequate explanation for why this image, instead of any other image, was commissioned on that specific occasion. Because of the lack of solid historical evidence, any attempt at reconstructing the development of the associated ideas could only be speculative.

We can consider the question of earlier traditions also in terms of materials, image conventions, etc. John and Susan Huntington, both at the forefront of this endeavor, suggest that we should look on the earliest surviving stone images of the Buddha/Bodhisattva as artifacts which appeared at certain moments in Indian history with a sufficient period of development behind them, most likely involving image traditions in other materials such as wood, ivory, or gold. A full pursuit of this extremely complex task is best left out of this general study of early Mahāyāna.

This chapter began with an intention to inquire into the implications of early Buddhist visual materials for understanding early Mahāyāna. My thesis in brief is this: whether it is plausible for scholars to employ early Buddhist art to speak positively of early Mahāyāna remains an open question. Early Buddhist art implicitly contains a number of clues to early

Mahāyāna, a careful study of which might therefore make a constructive contribution to a reformulation of our understanding of early Mahāyāna.

The basic difficulty is that early Buddhist visual materials, non-iconic or anthropomorphic, do not seem predisposed exclusively toward one *yāna* or another. In accordance with this quality, these visual materials may be usable for all Buddhists regardless of their *yāna* affiliation. There are numerous cases in which the *yāna* affiliation was overlooked or simply ignored by those engaged in these visual materials. If we submit these visual materials to truly rigorous scrutiny then we can no longer avoid a crucial question: How can materials which do not seem to affiliate themselves in an indisputable manner to Mahāyāna enrich our understanding of Mahāyāna?

We require an analytical scheme pertinent to early Mahāyāna. Such an analytical scheme should always be formulated within an open-ended framework of notions where there is no longer any underlying assumptions of a unitive early Mahāyāna across the many and varied documents. Instead, each plausible document is constitutive of early Mahāyāna, thus diversifying the meaning of Mahāyāna as an appellation. We would then have a better chance of avoiding the snares characteristic of rigid interpretations of early Mahāyāna. We also hope to avoid the presumption that Mahāyāna's development linearly progressed from the so-called pre-Mahāyāna or proto-Mahāyāna into early Mahāyāna. The reasons are as follows. First, this presumption tends to reinforce early Mahāyāna as an appellation with

unitive essence; the idea of proto-Mahāyāna is often founded on such an essentialist view of early Mahāyāna. Second, as I have demonstrated, the label of proto-Mahāyāna is problematic especially when it is applied to scriptural or epigraphical sources. Third, this presumption represents a simplistic and linear notion of development which is inadequate to accommodate both the complexities of a wide range of documents and related historical issues.

In order to see how the oldest extant Buddha/Bodhisattva images and their inscriptions can be conducive to understanding early Mahāyāna, let us return to the Govindnagar pedestal. Buddha Amitābha-centered texts are usually assigned to the Mahāyāna tradition. A quick look at the history of the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese reveals that several Amitābha-centered texts are among the earliest traslated Mahāyāna literature.[114] We can trace the source of the tradition of Buddha Amitābha not only by focusing on different recensions of textual materials in Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, etc., but by examining other forms of documents such as images or inscriptions. It is of course difficult to specify the relationships among different mediums which center around, or relate to, Buddha Amitābha. On this general and somewhat blurry point I shall simply suggest that visual or epigraphical documents are unlikely to have been isolated from textual

114. Cf. Mark L. Blum, "Pure Land Buddhism as an Alternative Mārga," 1994, pp. 35-36; Kōtatsu Fujita, "Pure Land Buddhism in India," 1996, pp. 6-8; John Huntington, "Rebirth in Amitābha's Sukhāvatī," 1996.

materials, since we do know that, among other things, many of those who were associated with visual or epigraphical documents were called *trepiṭakas*, those who know the three Piṭakas (i.e., the whole of Buddhist sacred literature) (cf. footnote 10). The Govindnagar pedestal, by inviting a synthesis of the many perspectives on the tradition of Buddha Amitābha offered by a variety of mediums, thus may be of assistance to our exploration of early Mahāyāna. However, visual or epigraphical documents remain a fluid medium in constant discourse not only with the textual tradition but with their social and cultural environment. This constant discourse indicates a need an approach which is at all pertinent and comprehensive must take proper account of the dynamic relationships that may have occurred among different textual, visual, epigraphical, social and cultural realms. Such an approach allows us to analyze disparities among different mediums and suspend the uncritical imposition of textual materials' *yāna* classification on images or inscriptions. For example, just because Amitābha-centered texts are usually assigned to the Mahāyāna tradition, does not mean the Govindnagar image of Buddha Amitābha was necessarily used in a Mahāyāna environment. While guarding against the imposition of such appellations as Mahāyāna or proto-Mahāyāna on the Govindnagar pedestal as a whole, one can still investigate its constituent elements in reference to their corresponding elements as evidenced in Mahāyāna texts. This pedestal undoubtedly documents the presence of the tradition of Buddha Amitābha in

the first half of the second century C.E. When viewed as pointing to still earlier development of related teachings and indicating earlier images in a medium other than stone, this image does have much to offer an exploration of early Mahāyāna.

So, is the Govindnagar pedestal relevent on the early Mahāyāna stage? For this pedestal itself, this remains an open question. But for at least some of the constituent elements of the Govindnagar image and its inscription, the overwhelming answer of answers is, quite simply, yes.

The most important feature of this methodology is its collect analysis of various forms of documents in a framework which does not assume universal *yāna* classification or essentialize the notion of Mahāyāna. Different mediums can be brought together to formulate an integrated perspective on early Mahāyāna, because they are not isolated from each other. That they may not function in the same socio-doctrinal contexts virtually precludes universal *yāna* classification.

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Chapter Nine

BODHISATTVA-SAMYAKTVA-NIYĀMA: A DOCTRINAL APPROACH TO THE CHARACTERIZATION OF MAHĀYĀNA IN LIGHT OF THE DYNAMICS OF THE THREE YĀNAS

The foregoing chapters problematized many of the issues in searching for the origins of Mahāyāna and inquiring into early Mahāyāna. Particular scholars' linear notions of development lie at the heart of most of our understanding of Mahāyāna. For example, super-imposed frameworks for the interpretation of Mahāyāna's development have led certain scholars to overlook inconsistencies in their contextual evidence. Further, efforts to construct clear demarcations in the stages of Mahāyāna's development have resulted in a disputable handling of non-specifically Mahāyāna documents. This chapter suggests an alternative methodology for exploring the definitive characteristics of Mahāyāna. This positive approach draws on the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* as used in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* to explore how the dynamics of the three *yāna*s may

lead us to formulate a new characterization of Mahāyāna.

My focus on the dynamic relationship between the three *yāna*s strays considerably from previous efforts to understand Mahāyāna through its historical reconstruction. Rather, the doctrinal approach I attempt to adopt is somewhat non-historical. Among contemporary Buddhologists, "history" is a notion that probably few would dare to ignore. But the question is which kind of history we will address. Many scholars have operated under the assumption that research into the origins of Mahāyāna or into early Mahāyāna would reveal the fundamental characteristics which constitute Mahāyāna. However, my survey in the foregoing chapters suggests that such an approach is riddled with assumptions about Mahāyāna's development that eventually color our findings. Until we develop a stronger body of solid evidence we will remain, as Louis de La Vallée Poussin phrased it "in the dark concerning the place, the date, the diffusion, and the way by which [Mahāyāna] religious ideas obtained literary and iconographic expression."[115] Although it is now many years since de La Vallée Poussin's paper was first published, the situation he describes has shown little sign of improving. Any attempt at historical reconstruction of Mahāyāna's development, therefore, rests on insubstantial foundations that more often than not lead to conjectures which are difficult either to definitively prove or to disprove. One

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115. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, "Buddhism," 1937, reprint by Prentice-Hall 1964, p. 98.

must, therefore, learn to treat the conjectured history of early Mahāyāna as a feature of imaginative projection, and not as the ground from which all understanding of our documents must begin.

Through a study of the spiritual development of Mahāyāna I create space for an inquiry into the suitable characterization of Mahāyāna free of the burden of searching for evidence of historical transmissions. The term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, as a lens for viewing the dynamics of the three *yāna*s, is a particularly useful tool. More precisely, the emergence of Mahāyāna cannot be fully explained without taking into account its relationships, doctrinal or historical, to the two *yāna*s (i.e., Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna) (cf. footnote 6), or at least to Śrāvakayāna. Therefore, insights we gain through the use of the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* also reveals to us that which uniquely characterizes Mahāyāna. However, it must be noted that inquiring into the characterization of Mahāyāna is not the same as reconstructing the history of early Mahāyāna, for the latter requires not only suitable characterization of Mahāyāna but evidence of its historical transmissions.

The *Pañca* of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature serves as the primary foundation for the positive point I seek to make in this chapter. Choosing the *Pañca* as source material for this study of the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, however, deserves clarification and explanation.

First, let me clarify the ways in which the messages of the *Pañca* connect

to early Mahāyāna. Simply in the chronological sense, judging from its Chinese translations the *Pañca* may be considered as an early Mahāyāna scripture, for it was first translated by Dharmarakṣa (竺法護) in 286 C.E. (*T.* 222), and then by Mokṣala (無羅叉; 無叉羅) in 291 C.E. (*T.* 221).[116] My position then is twofold. On the one hand, the messages of the *Pañca* will be considered in their own context, even as they have come to be reconstituted in connection with the Mahāyāna tradition. On the other, although the greater part of this chapter will make use of the *Pañca,* I do not take the *Pañca* to be representative of early Mahāyāna, nor do I consider early Mahāyāna a synchronized unity. To be sure, no single scripture or group of scriptures can adequately represent such a complex social, historical, and doctrinal tradition as early Mahāyāna. I approach early Mahāyāna only from a particular direction, i.e., from the perspective of the dynamics of the three *yāna*s as communicated by the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* in the *Pañca.* Allowing for this qualification, my approach may nevertheless help illuminate a new view of a significant aspect of early Mahāyāna, i.e., the aspect of the dynamics of the three *yāna*s.

Second, I have chosen from the many scriptures attributable to early Mahāyāna to focus on the *Pañca*. My reasoning is that the *Pañca* is just as

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116. The exemplar of the *T.* 221 was sent from Khotan to China in 282 C.E. For an English traslation of related references, see Zenryū Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism: From Its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yüan*, vol. I, 1985, pp. 109-110. For a general survey of the corpus of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, see Edward Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*, 1978.

useful documentary source as any other. A comprehensive comparison between the *Pañca* and other early Mahāyāna scriptures in various versions/recensions would undoubtedly be most fruitful, but here a single chapter can hardly do justice to the range of materials involved. Space limitations also do not provide the opportunity to extend this discussion to the *Aṣṭa*, which was first translated into Chinese in 179 C.E. (*T.* 224). During my long apprenticeship assisting Professor Lewis Lancaster in editing the *Gilgit Manuscript of the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra: Corresponding to the 2nd, (3rd) and 4th Abhisamayas*,[117] I naturally relied on the *Pañca* for scriptural evidence. If one attempts to use this scripture, which practical experience proves to be a crucial resource as a textual reference for the Mahāyāna tradition, and if this attempt proves to provide valuable insights into certain key concepts, then it is just as arbitrary not to use the text as it is to use it.

叅 Introduction to Samyaktva-niyāma

In the *Pañca*, there are three kinds of *samyaktva-niyāma*: that of the dharmas of Śrāvakayāna (聲聞乘法正性離生), that of the dharmas of Pratyekabuddhayāna (獨覺乘法正性離生), and that of the dharmas of

117. To be published shortly. Offering his expertise, ingenuity, and patience, Professor Lancaster introduced me to the domain of the Gilgit manuscripts. I wish to take this opportunity of recording my deep sense of gratitude to him.

Bodhisattvayāna (菩薩乘法正性離生).[118] Therefore the *Pañca*, through its recognition of three kinds of *samyaktva-niyāma* in connection with the three *yāna*s, demonstrates the dynamics of the three *yāna*s and many other related issues.

This section reviews the use and meaning of the term *samyaktva-niyāma* in order to lay the groundwork for later sections. Derived from the Sanskrit verb root √yam, to restrain (制限) or to gain control (執取), the term *niyāma* as a noun literally means restraint (制限), firmness (定、定位), assurance or certainty (定、決定). *Niyāma* in relation to the noun *āma* (rawness; 生 *sheng*) also conveys the meaning of de-rawing or ripening (離生 *li-sheng*).[119] Hsüan-tsang's traslation of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharma-kośa-śāstra* briefly offers one interpretation of the integrated meaning of these two aspects of *niyāma*. In a gloss of the expression "即此名入正性離生，亦復名入正性決定," it states:

> 生謂煩惱，或根未熟：聖道能越，故名離生．能決趣涅槃、或決了諦相故，諸聖道得決定名．
> The term *sheng* 生 (rawness) denotes defilements; it also means the [meritorious] roots which are not fully grown. The holy paths are called *li-*

118. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 166b. Also see, *T.* 221, vol. 8, p. 54b; *T.* 223, vol. 8, p. 293c (enter into *samyaktva-niyāma* 入正法位中 of the three *yānas*); *T.* 220(1), vol. 5, p. 715c, 728c (*śrāvaka-samyaktva-niyāma* 聲聞正性離生, *pratyekabuddha-samyaktva-niyāma* 獨覺正性離生, and *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* 菩薩正性離生); and *T.* 220(3), vol. 7, p. 566c (the *samyaktva-niyāma* of the *śrāvaka-gotra* 聲聞種性正性離生, *samyaktva-niyāma* of the *pratyekabuddha-gotra* 獨覺種性正性離生, and *samyaktva-niyāma* of the *bodhisattva-gotra* 菩薩種性正性離生).

119. Louis de La Vallée Poussin suggests in a footnote that: "*Niyāma* = skon med pa, in the treatise of Vasumitra on the sects; the Chinese *li-sheng* 離生 (Hsüan-tsang) should not be understood as 'abandoning of arising,' but 'abandoning of what is raw,' *ni-āma*, a fantastic etymology of *nyāma* = *niyāma* which is a grammatical variant of niyama." (Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, English trans. Leo M. Pruden, vol. 3, 1989, p. 1055.)

sheng 離生 (de-rawing) because they are capable of transcending [defilements]. The holy paths gain the appellation of 決定 (certainty) because they certainly can proceed to Nirvāṇa, or they certainly [can] thoroughly understand the aspects of the holy truths. (*T.* 1558, vol. 29, 阿毘達磨俱舍論, p. 121b.)

Therefore *niyāma*, or variant, *nyāma*, as understood in connection to *āma*, suggests the transcendence of defilements and thus leads to Nirvāṇa. The *Pañca* discusses at length *niyāma* in terms of the *āma*, in many cases characterized by the craving for dharmas (*dharma-tṛṣṇā*).[120]

The term *niyāma* combines into a variety of compounds, most frequently among them, *samyaktva-niyāma* (firmness, or on firm ground, in pursuing rightness; 正定、定於正、正位、正性決定、正性離生). When the context is clear, the inclusion of the term *samyaktva* in the compound can be optional.[121] *Niyāma* also appears in such compounds as *mityātva-niyāma* (P. *micchatta-niyāma*; false assurance, or assurance in the wrong direction).[122] Many sources distinguish three categories of sentient beings in terms of the notion of certainty: (1) *samyaktva-niyata-rāśi* (正性定聚), those who will certainly pursue rightness; (2) *mityātva-niyata-rāśi* (邪性定聚), those who, [having committed serious offences], will certainly move toward the wrong direction;

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120. Pañca-Gilgit, vol. 10(4), ff. 51b9-10: *āma ity āyuṣmaṃc chāradvatīputrôcyate bodhisatvasya mahāsatvasya yad uta dharma-tṛṣṇā* *T.* 220(2), vol. 7. p. 44a: 生謂法愛 . Cf. Pañca-Dutt, pp. 119-121; LSPW, pp. 95-97; *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, pp. 366c-368a; and LSPW, p. 570.

121. For example: *avakrānta-samyaktva-nyāma* (Pañca-Gilgit, vol. 10(5), f. 125a7) as compared with *avakrānta-niyāma* (Pañca-Kimura, 1986, p. 2).

122. See *Points of Controversy* [*Kathā-vatthu*], trans. Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids (London: The Pali Text Society, 1915), p. 186.

(3) *a-niyata-rāśi* (不定聚), those who do not come under the first or second category.[123]

The term *samyaktva* (rightness; 正、正性) in most *Abhidharma* texts serves as a synonym for "the Way to Arhatship," or Nirvāṇa, the main goal of the Śrāvaka's practices.[124] The compound *samyaktva-niyāma*, therefore, means that one is certain of pursuing or attaining Nirvāṇa, or indicates a firm ground on which one can approach Nirvāṇa.

In the Pāli *Nikāyas* and Chinese *Āgamas*, the compound *samyaktva-niyāma*, used in conjunction with other compounds, often describes either the *dharmânusārin* (living, or one who lives, in accordance with the Dharma; 隨法行) or the *śraddhânusārin* (living, or one who lives, in accordance with faith; 隨信行), both of which constitute the *srota-āpatti-phala-pratipannaka* (progressing in the direction of the fruit of the attainment of stream-entry; 預流向). Used in this way, the compound is often found in such expressions as *okkanto sammatta-niyāmaṃ* (one who enters into the certainty of pursuing

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123. For references see Étinne Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti (Vimalakīrtinirdeśa)*, 1976, pp. 303-307.

124. "Herein 'Assurance is a synonym of the Way [to arahantship].' So the expression 'for entering Assurance' means for entering the Way, for approaching the Way." (*The Debates Commentary* [*Kathāvatthuppakaraṇa-Aṭṭhakathā*], trans. Bimala Churn Law (London: The Pali Text Society, 1940), p. 102.) For more on this subject, one may refer to the "Appendix: Supplementary Notes" of the *Points of Controversy* [*Kathā-vatthu*], pp. 383-386.

"This Patience is the entry into *niyāma*, for it is the entry into the certitude (*niyama*) of the acquisition of absolute good or *samyaktva*. What is *samyaktva*? The Sūtra says that it is Nirvāṇa. *Niyama* or absolute determination with regard to the *samyaktva* is called *niyāma*, and also *niyama*." (Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, English trans., vol. 3, p. 944.)

rightness) as the first of five main constituents (*aṅgāni*) of the *dharmânusārin* or the *śraddhânusārin*.[125] The four other constituents include, in brief: (2) one who enters into the level of good people (*sappurisa-bhūmim*), (3) one who passes beyond the level of ordinary living beings (*puthujjana-bhūmim*), (4) one who is incapable of committing that deed whose performance would cause that one to be reborn in hell (*niraya*), or in the realm of animals, or in the realm of spirits (*peta*), (5) one who is incapable of dying without realizing the fruit of the attainment of stream-entry (*sotâpatti-phalam*).[126]

A number of *Abhidharma* texts emphasize that quality of the *samyaktva-niyāma* which denotes the passing of an individual beyond the level of ordinary living beings. For example, the *Nyāyānusāra* says:

> 入正性離生，超越異生地．(*T.* 1562, vol. 29, 阿毗達磨順正理論, p. 399b.)
> [When] one enters the stage in which the eventual attainment of enlightenment is assured (*niyāmāvakrānti*), that one surpasses the stage of being an ordinary person (*pṛthagjanatvabhūmi*).[127]

The *samyaktva-niyāma* may thus signify the first decisive stage of the

125. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 3.25.4.1, p. 225; *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, trans. F. L. Woodward, vol. 3 (London: The Pali Text Society, 1925), p. 177). Another example: *okkamati niyāmaṃ kusalesu dhammesu sammattaṃ* (enters on the assurance of perfection in conditions that are good) (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 1.3.22, p. 121; *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, trans. F. L. Woodward, vol. 1 (London: The Pali Text Society, 1932), p. 104). Cf. *Saṃyuktāgama-sūtra* (*T.* 99, vol. 2, pp. 16a, 224b-c).

126. For references see the previous footnote and R. M. L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 1992, pp. 129-133.

127. Collett Cox, *Disputed Dharmas: Early Buddhist Theories on Existence*, 1995, p. 204.

Buddhist path to awakening.[128] It represents the first major milestone for Buddhist practitioners. While on the one hand, a practitioner then stands a giant step ahead of most ordinary people, on the other, he has only just begun his journey on the path bound for rightness.

That quality of the *samyaktva-niyāma* which signifies that one will inevitably realize the fruit of stream-entry in their lifetime lends insight into the sequential stages of spiritual development. According to each stage of spiritual development follows a concurrent series of devoted practitioners (Skt. *śramaṇa*; P. *samaṇa*). As part of the *dharmânusārin* and the *śraddhânusārin*, *samyaktva-niyāma* precedes the *sotâpatti-phalam*. It suggests that the *samyaktva-niyāma* does not seem to be simply in a state of monentary existence. For those who have entered into the *samyaktva-niyāma*, it might take as long as a lifetime to attain the *sotâpatti-phalam*.[129] However, their eventual achievement of the *sotâpatti-phalam* is certain.

In addition, the idea of certainty also correlates with the *sotâpatti-phalam*. Among the formulae that define the stage of the stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*), we see such expressions as *niyato sambodhi-parāyano* (assured, and heading for awakening) and *saddhamma-niyato* (certain of pursuing the

128. Cf. L. Schmithausen, "The *Darśanamārga* Section of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and its Interpretation by Tibetan Commentators," 1995, p. 259.

129. Cf. R. M. L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 1992, pp. 131-133.

true Dharma).[130] While the *dharmânusārin* and the *śraddhânusārin* express similar ideas of certainty as the *sotâpatti-phalam*, they do so to different degrees. When entering for the first time into (Skt. *avakrāmati*; P. *okkamati*) the certainty (*niyāma*) of pursuing rightness, one becomes a *dharmânusārin* or *śraddhânusārin*. When one, among other things, becomes further certain or assured (*niyata*), the *sotâpatti-phalam* is thus attained.

Different textual traditions place subtly variant emphasis on the goal toward which the idea of certainty reaches. For example, the *Āgama/Nikāya* sūtras often associate this certainty with the terms *samyaktva* (rightness), *sambodhi* (awakening), or *saddhamma* (true Dharma). However, in most *Abhidharma* texts this certainty means primarily to lead to the goal of Nirvāṇa (cf. footnote 124).

In summary this section offers a brief account of the *samyaktva-niyāma*, including its meanings, its distinct characteristics, how it relates to several stages of the Buddhist path-and-fruit, and how different textual traditions present in. This account provides a necessary background for the following discussion of the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*.

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130. For references see Joy Manné, "Case Histories from the Pāli Canon II: *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmin, Anāgāmin, Arahat*," 1995, especially pp. 56-74.

丰 Bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma as an Experiential Category

The term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* delineates a distinct stage along a path of spiritual development for the Bodhisattva. The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, especially its *Śatasāhasrikā* and *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, offers a particularly in depth treatment of the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. The following *Pañca* passage develops an especially detailed context for *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, therefore I quote it at length:

> *āha: katama āyuṣman subhūte bodhisatvasya mahāsatvasya nyāmaḥ[\\] subhūtir āha: ihâyu/8/ṣma[ṃ]c chāradvatīputra bodhisatvo mahāsatvaḥ prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caran nâdhyātma-śunyatāyā[ṃ] bahirdhā-śunyatāyāṃ samanupaśyati\ na bahirdhā-śunyatāyām addhyātma-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ nâdhyā/9/tma-bahirdhā-śunyatāyāṃ śunyatā-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na śunyatā-śunyatāyām adhyātma-bahirdhā-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na śunyatā-śunyatāyāṃ mahā-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na mahā-śu/10/nyatāyāṃ śunyatā-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\\ na mahā-śunyatāyāṃ paramârtha-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na paramârtha-śunyatāyāṃ mahā-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na paramârtha-śunyatā/11/yāṃ saṃskṛta-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\\ na saṃskṛta-śunyatāyāṃ paramârtha-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na saṃskṛta-śunyam asaṃskṛta-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ nâsaṃskṛta-śunyatāyā[ṃ] saṃskṛ/12/ta-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na paramârtha-śunyatāyāṃ saṃskṛta-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\\ na saṃskṛta-śunyatāyāṃ paramârtha-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na saṃskṛta-śunyam asaṃskṛ/13/ta-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ nâsaṃskṛta-śunyatāyā[ṃ] saṃskṛta-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\\ nâsaṃskṛta-śunyatāyām anavarāgra-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ nânavarāgra-śunyatāyām a/14/saṃskṛta-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ nânavarāgra-śunyatāyām avakāra-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\\ nâvakāra-śunyatāyām a[na]varāgra-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ nâvakāra-śunyatāyāṃ [f. 52b] prakṛti-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na prakṛti-śunyatāyām avakāra-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na prakṛ(ti-śunyatāyāṃ) svalakṣaṇa-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na svalakṣaṇa-śunya/2/tāyāṃ prakṛti-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na svalakṣaṇa-śunyatāyāṃ sarva-dharma-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na sarva-dharma-śunyatāyāṃ svalakṣaṇa-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na sarva-dha/3/rma-śunyatāyāṃ svalakṣaṇa-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ na sarva-dharma-*

śunyatāyāṃm abhāva-svabhāva-śunyatāṃ samanupaśyati\ nâbhāva-svabhāva-śunyatāyāṃ sarva-dharma-śunyatāṃ sama/4/nupaśyati\\ evaṃ khalv āyuṣmaṃc chāradvatīputra bodhisatvo mahāsatvaḥ prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caran bodhisatva-nyāma-[a]vakrāmati (Pañca-Gilgit, vol. 10(4), ff. 51b7-52b4.)

For evidence on how other versions of the sūtras of the *Prajñāpāramitā* demonstrate an almost exactly parallel formula explaining the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, see Appendix 1. It is through describing a series of practices that this passage defines the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. It is also through this specific method that one attains *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* and therefore rises to a particular level of spiritual development. This *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* attainment formula, attributed to Subhūti, revolves around the cultivation of various modes of *śūnyatā* (devoidness; emptiness). In order to attain *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, one needs to develop the practices expressed in the above passage through the following sequential steps:

不見 NOT SEEING	不待 NOT DEPENDING ON	而觀 TO VISUALIZE
內空 adhyātma-śūnyatā	內空 adhyātma-śūnyatā	外空 bahirdhā-śūnyatā
外空 bahirdhā-ś	外空 bahirdhā-ś	內空 adhyātma-ś
	外空 bahirdhā-ś	內外空 adhyātma-bahirdhā-ś
內外空 adhyātma-bahirdhā-ś	內外空 adhyātma-bahirdhā-ś	外空 bahirdhā-ś
	內外空 adhyātma-bahirdhā-ś	空空 śūnyatā-ś
空空 śūnyatā-ś	空空 śūnyatā-ś	內外空 adhyātma-bahirdhā-ś
	空空 śūnyatā-ś	大空 mahā-ś
大空 mahā-ś	大空 mahā-ś	空空śūnyatā-ś
	大空 mahā-ś	勝義空 paramârtha-ś
勝義空 paramârtha-ś	勝義空 paramârtha-ś	大空 mahā-ś
	勝義空 paramârtha-ś	有為空 saṃskṛta-ś
有為空 saṃskṛta-ś	有為空 saṃskṛta-ś	勝義空 paramârtha-ś
	有為空 saṃskṛta-ś	無為空 asaṃskṛta-ś
無為空 asaṃskṛta-ś	無為空 asaṃskṛta-ś	有為空 saṃskṛta-ś

	無為空 asaṃskṛta-ś	畢竟空 atyanta-ś
畢竟空 atyanta-ś	畢竟空 atyanta-ś	無為空 asaṃskṛta-ś
	畢竟空 atyanta-ś	無際空 anavarâgra-ś
無際空 anavarâgra-ś	無際空 anavarâgra-ś	畢竟空 atyanta-ś
	無際空 anavarâgra-ś	散空 avakāra-ś
散空 avakāra-ś	散空 avakāra-ś	無際空 anavarâgra-ś
	散空 avakāra-ś	無變異空 avipariṇāma-ś
無變異空 avipariṇāma-ś	無變異空 avipariṇāma-ś	散空 avakāra-ś
	無變異空 avipariṇāma-ś	本性空 prakṛti-ś
本性空 prakṛti-ś	本性空 prakṛti-ś	無變異空 avipariṇāma-ś
	本性空 prakṛti-ś	自相空 svalakṣaṇa-ś
自相空 svalakṣaṇa-ś	自相空 svalakṣaṇa-ś	本性空 prakṛti-ś
	自相空 svalakṣaṇa-ś	共相空 sāmānya-lakṣaṇa-ś
共相空 sāmānya-lakṣaṇa-ś	共相空 sāmānya-lakṣaṇa-ś	自相空 svalakṣaṇa-ś
	共相空 sāmānya-lakṣaṇa-ś	一切法空 sarva-dharma-ś
一切法空 sarva-dharma-ś	一切法空 sarva-dharma-ś	共相空 sāmānya-lakṣaṇa-ś
	一切法空 sarva-dharma-ś	不可得空 anupalambha-ś
不可得空 anupalambha-ś	不可得空 anupalambha-ś	一切法空 sarva-dharma-ś
	不可得空 anupalambha-ś	無性空 abhāva-ś
無性空 abhāva-ś	無性空 abhāva-ś	不可得空 anupalambha-ś
	無性空 abhāva-ś	自性空 svabhāva-ś
自性空 svabhāva-ś	自性空 svabhāva-ś	無性空 abhāva-ś
	自性空 svabhāva-ś	無性自性空 abhāva-svabhāva-ś
無性自性空 abhāva-svabhāva-ś	無性自性空 abhāva-svabhāva-ś	自性空 svabhāva-ś

The cultivation of *śūnyatā* is essential for the attainment of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma.* The three headings marked in underline, "not seeing," "not depending on," and "to visualize," indicate the three major techniques applied to the multiple modes of *śūnyatā* which are listed from the first to the last row. Therefore, from left to right the first row reads: does not visualize *bahirdhā-śūnyatā* by seeing (the substantiality of) *adhyātma-śūnyatā* or by depending on *adhyātma-śūnyatā*. The last row reads: does not visualize *svabhāva-śūnyatā* by seeing (the substantiality of) *abhāva-svabhāva-śūnyatā* or by depending on *abhāva-svabhāva-śūnyatā*. A

considerable proficiency in each and every mode of *śūnyatā* is a prerequisite for moving forward into the above sequential steps. Once capable of moving through the sequential steps from the first to the last row a Bodhisattva who courses in the *Prajñāpāramitā* enters into the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. A Bodhisattva at this level of spiritual development can master all the basic modes of *śūnyatā* by managing two or three modes at one time and by dynamically connecting all of the modes up in a sequence. Therefore it is in relation to a series of practices that we discern a definition of *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. This term sets the qualifications for becoming a Bodhisattva who is in the state, or at the level, of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*.

The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature explaines that this *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* attainment formula is designed to abandon the craving for dharmas (*dharma-tṛṣṇā*) and therefore to take a Bodhisattva's practices to new heights (cf. footnote 120 and Appendix 1). But how is it done? The cultivation of *śūnyatā* is essential for abandoning the craving for dharmas. However, since *śūnyatā* is also a dharma, one should not also reify it as an object of attachment. By moving through the multiple modes of *śūnyatā*, a Bodhisattva (1) is more likely not to get attached to just one mode of *śūnyatā*, (2) may realize the insubstantiality and impossessibility (*anupalambha*; 無得、不可得) of various modes of *śūnyatā* which have been thus entered into and departed from, and (3) will increase his or her versatility, and thus enhance

his or her skills, in coping with multiple dharmas. Therefore, the first two are conducive to the abandonment of the craving for dharmas, and the third is directed toward the skills necessary for a higher level of achievement. This analysis brings us to a crucial question which concerns the characteristics of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*.

舞 Bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma as the First Milestone on the Assured Bodhisattva Path

The term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* both connects and distinguishes the three *yāna*s. As discussed in the previous section, the capability of moving through the multiple modes of *śūnyatā* is essential to entering into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. A Bodhisattva trains in the various modes of *śūnyatā* while also coursing in the *prajñāpāramitā* (*prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caran*; 修行般若波羅蜜多時). The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature explains that a Bodhisattva is not ready to enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* until he/she has trained in all the paths.

> *Bhagavān āha: na Subhūte śrāvakamārgeṇa bodhisattvo mahāsattvo bodhisattvanyāmam avakrāmati. na pratyekabuddhamārgeṇa na Buddhamārgeṇa. a(pi tu khalu Subhūte bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ sarvamārgeṣu śikṣitvā bodhisattvanyāma)m avakrāmati.* (Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1962, pp. 181-182.)[131]

131. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 349a: 佛告善現：諸菩薩摩訶薩不由聲聞道、不由獨覺道、不由如來道得入菩薩正性離生，然於諸道遍學滿已，由菩薩道得入菩薩正性離生． LSPW, p. 539: "*The Lord*: Not by either the path of the Disciples, or that of the Pratyekabuddhas, or that of the Buddhas. But the Bodhisattva enters on the Bodhisattva's way of certain salvation after he has trained in all the paths."

The requirement that a Bodhisattva must have trained in all the paths (*sarvamārgeṣu śikṣitvā*) in his/her efforts to enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* practically and conceptually connects the Buddhist *yāna*s. While a Bodhisattva who makes every endeavor to enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* must gain sufficient experience in all the paths, moving through the multiple modes of *śūnyatā* lies at the forefront of this endeavor. After training in all the paths and cultivating the ability to move through the multiple modes of *śūnyatā*, a Bodhisattva, by way of the Bodhisattva path, enters into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*.

In one sense, the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* marks the first milestone on the assured Bodhisattva path, the main subject of the present section. It is also the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* that distinguishes the Bodhisattva path from the two *yāna*s. In particular, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature proclaims that one cannot enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* without transcending the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, a topic to be discussed in the next section.

The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature depicts a Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path traversing the spiritual distance between an ordinary mentality and the utmost right and perfect enlightenment.[132] Appendix 2 contains examples of

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132. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 88c: 復次，善現！汝問如是大乘從何處出、至何處住者，善現！如是大乘從三界中出，至一切智智中住，然以無二為方便故，無出無住 . Pañca-Gilgit, vol. 10(5), f. 97b3-97b4: *yat punaḥ subhūtir evam āha kutas tad yānaṃ niryāsya[tîti trai-dhā]/4/tukā[n] niryāsyati\ yena sarvajñatā tena sthāsyati tat punar advaya-yogena[\]* Pañca-Dutt, p. 225: *yat punaḥ subhūtir evam āha\ kutas tad yānaṃ niryāsyatîti trai-dhātukān niryāsyati yena sarvâkārajñatā tena sthāsyati tat punar advaya-yogena* LSPW,

the considerable variety in the presentations of the ways in which the Bodhisattva path is segmented into several parts or milestones. The milestons depict noticeable steps in the long process of spiritual transformation. Each milestone represents a major breakthrough in spiritual transformation. One must meet certain requisite conditions in order to move from one milestone to the next. In particular, before reaching a further milestone, one must have passed the antecedent one(s). The following sequential parts represent the significant markers on the Bodhisattva path:

Pre-milestones: The lists of milestones contain variety of pre-milestones, or *prayoga* (加行; intensified effort; preparation). The pre-milestones are divided into two categories: (1) the teachings and levels primarily associated with the Śrāvakas or Pratyekabuddhas, and (2) an initial development of the dharmas necessary for the achievement of Buddhahood, particularly the aspiration to enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), various modes of *śūnyatā*, the six perfections (*pāramitā*), and skill in means (*upāya-kauśalya*).

Milestone One: The transcendence of the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, and subsequent entrance into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*.

Milestone Two: The achievement of irreversible (*avaivartika* or *avinivartanīya*) Bodhisattva.

Milestone Three: The attainment of the utmost right and perfect

p. 179: "As again, Subhuti, you say, "from where will that vehicle go forth?" It will go forth from what belongs to the triple world. Where the knowledge of all modes is, there it will come to a stand. And that again in consequence of nonduality."

enlightenment.

The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature elaborates on both the pre-milestones and each of the above three milestones. For our purposes in this section the first milestone is particularly important because it constitutes the beginning of the assured Bodhisattva path. Upon attainment of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* a Bodhisattva is assured pursuing the two major goals of the Bodhisattva's career (*bodhisattva-cārikā* or *bodhisattva-caryā*; 菩薩行) within the Prajñāpāramitā-Mahāyāna: the utmost right and perfect enlightenment, and dedication to benefiting sentient beings.[133]

In the context of the Prajñāpāramitā-Mahāyāna, with its emphasis on the Bodhisattva's career, the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* as the first milestone on the assured Bodhisattva path is crucial to our consideration of the Mahāyāna as a distinct *yāna*. In this respect, two points arise for scrutiny. First, many if not most writers theorize that "What distinguishes the Bodhisattva from the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* is his great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*)."[134] In contrast we find that, as the next section discusses further, the Bodhisattva's attainment of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*

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133. *T.* 220(3), vol. 7, p. 699c: 佛告善現：菩薩行者，謂為無上菩提故行，或為饒益諸有情故名菩薩行． (The Buddha said to Subhūti: "As a career toward the unsurpassed enlightenment or for the sake of benefiting sentient beings is it called the Bodhisattva's career.") See also and cf. *T.* 220(1), vol. 6, pp. 882c-883a; *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 343b; *T.* 221, vol. 8, p. 116b; *T.* 223, vol. 8, p. 378c; Pañca-Kimura 1992, p. 139; Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1962, p. 167.

134. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., "Sanctification on the Bodhisattva Path," 1988, p. 181.

marks the first crucial advance beyond the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. The great compassion plays little role in this undertaking. Second, the present work also counters the opinion that because the Bodhisattva path "is open to everyone, monks and laypersons alike," "Mahāyāna thus drastically reduces the qualifications for becoming a Bodhisattva."[135] This generalization often overlooks the differentiation among various levels of spiritual development of Mahāyāna and of the two *yānas* while determining if the qualifications in question are reduced or not. Just as there are sequential milestones on the Bodhisattva path, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature acknowledges various levels of Bodhisattvas, including novice Bodhisattvas, called Bodhisattvas who newly set out in the conveyance (*nava-yāna-saṃprasthita-bodhisattva*) or Bodhisattvas who have just begun to set out in the conveyance (*prathama-yāna-saṃprasthita-bodhisattva*). Elaborated lists of milestones reveal distinct features for each major milestone and its corresponding level of Bodhisattvas. To become a novice Bodhisattva is certainly not the same as to become an advanced Bodhisattva. This distinction is also true of a novice and an advanced follower within each of the two *yānas*. It is indeed important that "those who become arahants originally must begin on this gradual path as ordinary ignorant householders."[136] However, simply because the Śrāvakayāna is open to

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135. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., "Sanctification on the Bodhisattva Path," 1988, p. 182.

136. George D. Bond, "The Arahant: Sainthood in Theravāda Buddhism," 1988, p.

ordinary people there is no implication that the qualifications for becoming a stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*) or an Arahant (Arhat) for such a population are thus drastically reduced. One wonders how that would be otherwise for Mahāyāna.

The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature places much emphasis on training in the teachings primarily associated with the Śrāvakas or Pratyekabuddhas as one of the qualifications for attaining *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. In the *Pañca*, for example, we read:

> 因修聖道，斷諸煩惱．由此煩惱所覆障故，尚不能證聲聞獨覺相應之地，況入菩薩正性離生．若不能入菩薩正性離生，豈能證得一切智智．
> Because he practices the holy path, he will forsake defilements. If he is covered with and hindered by these defilements, he cannot even achieve the stages associated with the Śrāvakas or Pratyekabuddhas, let alone enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. If he is unable to enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, how can he realize *sarvajña-jñāna*! (*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 353b.)[137]

The passage unequivocally counsels the practice of the two *yāna*s' teachings as a necessary condition for entering into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. A number of more general passages in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature similarly proscribe cultivation of all of the Buddhist paths for the Bodhisattva. For example:

sarvamārgāḥ Subhūte bodhisattvena mahāsattvena-utpādayitavyāḥ,

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137. *T.* 220(1), vol. 6, p. 917b: 因修聖道，斷諸煩惱，或聲聞相應、或獨覺相應．由斯煩惱所覆障故，諸菩薩摩訶薩豈能入菩薩正性離生．若不能入菩薩正性離生，豈能證得一切相智．Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1962, p. 197: . . . *yāṃ mārga-bhāvanām āgamya kleśān na prajahāti śrāvaka-pratisaṃyuktān vā pratyekabuddha-pratisaṃyuktāṃ vā, yaiḥ kleśair āvṛto bodhisattva-nyāmaṃ na-avakrāmet, bodhisattva-nyāmam anavakraman sarvâkārajñatāṃ na-anuprāpnuyāt,* . . . See also and cf. *T.* 221, vol. 8, p. 119c; *T.* 223, vol. 8, p. 383c; *T.* 220(3), vol. 7, p. 707c; LSPW, p. 547.

sarvamārgāḥ jñātavyā, ye ca śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha-mārgā. ye ca bodhisattva-mārgāḥ, te ca mārgāḥ paripūrayitavyāḥ, taiś ca mārgair mārga-karaṇīyaṃ kartavyam. (Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1962, pp. 147-148.)[138]

Along similar lines, many sources also underscore the necessity of training in all dharmas. Through the following conversation we understand that should a Bodhisattva leave out even just one dharma he or she thus may not attain the knowledge of all modes (*sarvâkāra-jñatā*; 一切相智) or the cognition of all-knowing (*sarvajña-jñāna*; 一切智智), both of which are synonyms for the utmost right and perfect enlightenment.

api tu khalu Subhūte sarvadharmā bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya mārga(ḥ). tat kiṃ manyase Subhūte asti kaścid dharmo yatra bodhisattvena mahāsattvena na śikṣitavyaṃ, yatra śikṣitvā-anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbudhyeta? nâsti Subhūte kaścid dharmo yatra bodhisattvena mahāsattvena na śikṣitavyaṃ. aśikṣitvā bodhisattvo mahāsattvo na śaktaḥ sar[v]ākārajñātām anuprāptum. (Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1974, p. 98.)[139]

Most sūtras of the *Prajñāpāramitā* present the teachings of all paths that a Bodhisattva must practice through a long list of dharmas in progressive order of development. See Appendix 3 for examples. Through the course of his

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138. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 337b: 諸菩薩摩訶薩應學遍知一切道相，謂聲聞道相、獨覺道相、菩薩道相、如來道相．諸菩薩摩訶薩於此諸道應常修學，令速圓滿． LSPW, p. 518: "The Bodhisattva, the great being, should produce and cognize all paths. The paths of the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas, and those of the Boddhisattvas -- those paths should be fulfilled, and through them should be done what ought to be done on them."

139. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 409c: 復次，善現！總一切法皆是菩薩摩訶薩道．善現！於汝意云何，頗有法諸菩薩摩訶薩所不應學，諸菩薩摩訶薩不學此法能得無上正等菩提不？善現對曰：不也，世尊！佛告善現：如是、如是．定無有法諸菩薩摩訶薩所不應學；諸菩薩摩訶薩不學此法，必不能得所求無上正等菩提．所以者何？若菩薩摩訶薩不學一切法，定不能得一切智智． LSPW, p. 615: "Moreover all dharmas are the Bodhisattva's path. What do you think, Subhuti, is there any dharma in which the Bodhisattva should not be trained, and yet win full enlightenment? There is no dharma in which he should not be trained, because untrained (in each and every dharma) a Bodhisattva is not capable of attaining the knowledge of all modes."

or her career, a Bodhisattva must integrate the teachings of all paths. The dharma of the *prajñāpāramitā* is assigned to accomplish this task.

> *tathā hi subhūte ye ke-cit kuśalā dharmā[ḥ] śrāvaka-dharmā vā pratyekabuddha-dharmā vā buddha-dharmā vā sarve te prajñāpāramitāyāṃ saṃgrahaṃ samavasaraṇaṃ gacchanti*\\ (Pañca-Gilgit, vol. 10(5), f. 108b15-109a1.)[140]

The ways in which the *prajñāpāramitā* accommodates the dharmas of the three *yāna*s are the subject of extensive elaboration in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. I need not repeat the scripture here, but for its conclusion, we read as follows:

> *tathā hy atra prajñāpāramitāyāṃ trīṇi yānāni vistareṇôpadiṣṭāni.* (Pañca-Kimura 1986, pp. 97-98.)[141]

The term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, as primarily used in the *Pañca*, signifies a distinctive level of the Bodhisattva path, and forms characteristic qualities which revolve around the Bodhisattva's career and the *prajñāpāramitā*. In particular, one who enters into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* must have trained in the two *yāna*s. Both of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* and the assured Bodhisattva path are thus inseparable from the two *yāna*s. However, training in the two *yāna*s constitutes only part

140. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 110a: 一切善法、菩提分法，若聲聞法、若獨覺法、若菩薩法、若如來法，如是一切無不攝入甚深般若波羅蜜多． LSPW, p. 188: "Because whatever wholesome dharmas there are that act as wings to enlightenment -- be they Disciple-dharmas, Pratyekabuddha-dharmas, Bodhisattva-dharmas or Buddha-dharmas -- they are comprehended in Perfect Wisdom and come together therein." See also and cf. Pañca-Dutt, p. 243.

141. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 164c: 如是般若波羅蜜多秘密藏中廣說三乘相應法故． LSPW, p. 255: "Because in this perfection of wisdom the three vehicles are explained in detail."

of the qualifications for attaining *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. To fully achieve this level of spiritual development one must also move through the multiple modes of *śūnyatā* while cultivating the *prajñāpāramitā*. Only through the development of multifold *śūnyatā* and the cultivation of the *prajñāpāramitā* is it possible to transcend the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas and subsequently to reach the first milestone on the assured Bodhisattva path. In this respect the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* distinguishes the assured Bodhisattva path from the two *yāna*s.

帯 Bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma as an Initial Triumph of the Assured Bodhisattva over the Levels of the Two Yānas

A recurrent theme in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature is the exaltation of the assured Bodhisattva over the levels of the two *yāna*s. The lists of sequential milestones in Appendix 2 repeatedly reveal this theme. The milestones may be listed with or without reference to a particular pratice such as meditative concentration (*dhyāna*). In presenting this theme the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature most frequently introduces the following phrase: "having transcended the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, the Bodhisattva enters into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*." For example:

> *sa ābhiḥ śūnyatābhiḥ bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ śrāvakapratyekabuddhabhūmī atikramya bodhisattvanyāmam avakrāmati.* (Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1974, p. 31.)[142]

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142. T. 220(2), vol. 7, p. 366c: 是菩薩摩訶薩由住此空，超諸聲聞獨覺等地，證入菩薩正性離生 . See also and cf. Pañca-Watanabe 1992, p. 11; LSPW, p. 570.

This phrase describes how the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* functions in distinguishing the assured Bodhisattva path from the two *yānas*. Here, again, the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* is concerned with the development of facility and mastery in various modes of *śūnyatā*. More particularly this facility and mastery of *śūnyatā* is linked to the cultivation of the *prajñāpāramitā*, a key feature of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. Such features of the *prajñāpāramitā* as the non-practice (*apracarita*; 無行、不可行), impossessibility (*anupalambha*; 無得、不可得), non-utterance (*apravyāhāra*; 無説、不可説), and non-demonstration (*adeśanā*; 無示、不可示) of the dharmas under cultivation also come to characterize *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. The *anupalambha* epitomizes these features, and is recognized as the most conspicuous characteristic of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*.

> *Bhagavān āha: sarvaḥ Subhūte bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya-upalaṃbhaḥ āmaḥ, sarvonupalaṃbho nyāmaḥ. . . . niyāmaḥ punaḥ Subhūte yatraiṣāṃ dharmāṇāṃ pravyāhāro'pi nopalabhyate. rūpasya yāvat sarvākārajñatāyā.* (Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1974, p. 31.)[143]

From this we can see that the triumph over the levels of the two *yānas* is presented and characterized in relationship to direct insight into *anupalambha* based on the progressive development of the *śūnyatā* and *prajñāpāramitā*.

The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature highlights again and again the dharmas of the *śūnyatā*, *prajñāpāramitā*, *anupalambha*, and their related features as the

143. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 368a: 佛告善現：諸菩薩摩訶薩以一切有所得為生，以一切無所得為離生 . . . . 諸菩薩摩訶薩以如是等種種法門無行、無得、無説、無示為無所得，即無所得説名離生 . See also and cf. Pañca-Watanabe 1992, pp. 11-12; LSPW, p. 570.

keys both to the triumph over the levels of the two *yāna*s and to the attainment of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. One who fails to develop these key dharmas cannot transcend the levels of the two *yāna*s. The Buddha expands on this point:

> 諸菩薩摩訶薩行深般若波羅蜜多時，無有少法不如實見：於一切法如實見時，於一切法都無所得：於一切法無所得時，則如實見一切法空，謂如實見四諦所攝及所不攝諸法皆空．如是見時，能入菩薩正性離生．由能入菩薩正性離生故，便住菩薩種性地中：既住菩薩種性地中，則能決定不從頂墮：若從頂墮，應墮聲聞或獨覺地．
> When Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas are cultivating the profound *prajñāpāramitā*, there are not any dharmas which they do not truthfully see. While truthfully seeing all dharmas, they take no possession of any dharmas. While taking no possession of any dharmas, they truthfully see that all dharmas are *śūnya*, i.e., they see that all dharmas, whether or not included in the four Noble Truths, are *śūnya*. While seeing [the dharmas] in this manner, they are able to enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. Because they are able to enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, they become established on the stage of those who have become one of the Bodhisattva-clan, and as a result, they assuredly cannot fall from the Summits. When falling from the Summits, one should fall onto the levels of the Śrāvakas or Pratyekabuddhas. (*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 419b.)[144]

We have observed that to triumph over the levels of the two *yāna*s a Bodhisattva must cultivate the *prajñāpāramitā* with particular attention to *śūnyatā*, eventually culminating in *anupalambha*. The following passage confirms that it is this superior cognition and vision (*jñānena ca darśanena ca*; 以勝智見), rather than great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*), that serves as the key to this achievement in spiritual development.

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144. Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1974, p. 120: *bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caran na tān dharmāṃs tathā paśyati. yathā paśyaṃ kiṃcid dharmam upalabheta. anupalabhamānaḥ sarvadharmāṃc chūnyā iti paśyati. satyaparyāpannāṃś ca-asatyaparyā(pannāñ ca tān sarvān śūnyā iti paśyati. sa evaṃ pa)śyann avakrāntaniyāmo bodhisattvo mahāsattvo bodhisattva-gotrabhū-bhūmau sthito bhavati. sa bodhisattva-gotrabhū-bhūmau sthitvā na mūrdhna nipātaṃ patati. yena mūrdhna nipātena śrāvakabhūmau yā pratye(kabuddhabhūmau vā patati).* See also and cf. *T.* 223, vol. 8, p. 412a-b; LSPW, p. 630.

bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ prathamcittôtpādam upādāya ṣaṭsu pāramitāsu carann aṣṭau bhūmīr jñānena ca darśanena câtikrāmati. katamā aṣṭa? yad uta śuklavidarśanā-bhūmir gotra-bhūmir aṣṭamka-bhūmir darśana-bhūmis tanū-bhūmir vītarāga-bhūmiḥ kṛtāvī-bhūmiḥ pratyekabuddha-bhūmir, ayaṃ bhūmi-nirdeśaḥ. sa imā aṣṭau bhūmīr jñānena darśanena câtikramya mārgajñatayā bodhisattva-niyāmam avakrāmati, bodhisattva-niyāmam avakramya sarv'ākārajñatā-jñānena sarva-vāsanā'nusaṃdhikleśān prajahāti. (Pañca-Kimura 1992, pp. 154-155.)[145]

The above passage, typical of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, demonstrates that not only the followers of the two *yāna*s but also Bodhisattvas cultivate the levels of the two *yāna*s, therefore reinforcing the value of all three *yāna*s. The development of the specific "cognition and vision" is what ultimately leads a Bodhisattva who has trained in the two *yāna*s to transcend (or pass beyond; *atikrāmati*) the levels of the two *yāna*s. Contrary to popular opinion, I have found very little evidence in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature that the assured Bodhisattva's triumph debases or rejects the two *yāna*s.[146]

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145. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 349b: 諸菩薩摩訶薩從初發心勇猛精進修行六種波羅蜜多，以勝智見超過八地，謂淨觀地乃至獨覺地．雖於如是所說八地皆遍修學，而能以勝智見超過，由道相智得入菩薩正性離生．已入菩薩正性離生，漸次復由一切相智，證得圓滿一切智智，永斷一切習氣相續． LSPW, pp. 540-541: "the Bodhisattva, the great being, beginning with the first thought of enlightenment, coursing in the six perfections, transcends the eight stages (of the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas) with his cognition and vision. Which eight? The stage of bright insight, the stage of becoming one of the clan, the eight-lowest stage, the stage of vision, the stage of refinement, the stage of turning away from passion, the stage of him who has done, the stage of a Pratyekabuddha. Having gone beyond these eight stages with his cognition and vision, he enters, by the knowledge of the modes of the path, on the Bodhisattva's special way of salvation, and through the cognition of the knowledge of all modes he forsakes the last residues of the defilements." See also and cf. Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1962, p. 183.

146. Cf. Karel Werner, "Bodhi and Arahattaphala: From Early Buddhism to Early Mahayana," 1983, pp. 167-181. Werner maintains that the emergence of Mahāyāna or Bodhisattvayāna was mainly prompted by the historical trend which "at the bottom of it all was a desire to make arahantship more easily available" (p. 174), and which can be characterized as "the debasement of the original ideal of spiritual accomplishment of arahantship" (p. 178).

丼 Conclusion: The Dynamics of the Three Yānas

We can summarize this investigation of the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* as used in the *Pañca* by drawing together our findings. In addition to the inclusion of the teachings of the two *yāna*s in the Bodhisattva's career, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature contains a variety of instances that recognize the achievement of the two *yāna*s. Clearly the assured, or advanced, Bodhisattva stands as a paradigm of the Mahāyāna tradition for many of its followers. However, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature does not present Mahāyāna as the only *yāna* which followers of the Buddha's teachings must pursue. The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature expounds on the subject of the three *yāna*s in detail (cf. footnote 141). For example, the following passage reveals the many paths available to the Buddhist religion's diverse audience.

> 是菩薩摩訶薩令諸有情住如是等諸善法已，或令趣入正性離生，得預流果、乃至令得阿羅漢果：或令趣入正性離生，漸次證得獨覺菩提：或令趣入正性離生，漸次修學諸菩薩地，速趣無上正等菩提．
>
> After establishing sentient beings in these wholesome dharmas, the Bodhisattva inspires them to enter into *samyaktva-niyāma*, and attain the fruit of the stream-enterer, up to and including Arhatship; or the Bodhisattva inspires them to enter into *samyaktva-niyāma*, and gradually attain the enlightenment of the Pratyekabuddha; or the Bodhisattva inspires them to enter into *samyaktva-niyāma*, gradually cultivate various stages of the Bodhisattva, and then rapidly approach the utmost right and perfect enlightenment. (*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 406c.)[147]

In particular, there are three kinds of *samyaktva-niyāma* corresponding to the three *yāna*s respectively (cf. footnote 118). The three kinds of *samyaktva-niyāma* accommodate sentient beings' different religious needs and goals. For

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147. See also and cf. *T.* 221, vol. 8, p. 134b; *T.* 223, vol. 8, p. 405c; *T.* 220 (1), vol. 6, p. 1028b; *T.* 220 (3), vol. 7, p. 745c; Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1974, p. 92; LSPW, p. 611.

all the three *yānas* the *samyaktva-niyāma* fulfills one basic goal: certainty of pursuing what is right for each *yāna*. Upon attainment of the *samyaktva-niyāma* one becomes an assured practitioner in the sense that the link between one's current accomplishments and subsequent goals is certain. The assured practitioner then pursues those goals which accord to the *yāna* orientation: Arhatship (*arhattva*) in Śrāvakayāna, the enlightenment of the Pratyekabuddha (*pratyekabodhi*) in Pratyekabuddhayāna, and the utmost right and perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyaksambodhi*) in Bodhisattvayāna or Mahāyāna.

The *Pañca* contains numerous references of such ideas as "moving toward Nirvāṇa through the dharmas of the three *yānas*" (乘三乘法而趣涅槃) and "attaining the Nirvāṇa of the three *yānas*" (證得三乘涅槃). See Appendix 4 for documentation of such instances. Further, the goal of Nirvāṇa exists alongside that of the utmost right and perfect enlightenment. For example, we read:

> . . . *te sarve 'nupūrveṇa tribhir yānaiḥ parinirvānti, yad uta śrāvakayānena vā pratyekabuddhayānena vā mahāyānena vā, anuttarām api samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbudhyante*, . . . (Pañca-Kimura 1992, p. 131.)[148]

While this passage includes all three *yānas* as legitimate paths to Nirvāṇa, it does not go so far as to debase this goal. The following passage emphasizes all the levels of the two *yānas* as being endowed with undeniable

148. LSPW, p. 525: ". . . they all will gradually reach the final Nirvana through the three vehicles, i.e. by the vehicle of the Disciples, the vehicle of the Pratyekabuddhas, or the great vehicle they will win full enlightenment." See also and cf. *T.* 220(1), vol. 6, p. 874a-b; *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 340a.

accomplishments.

> *tad-yathā 'pi nāma Subhūte srotaāpannaḥ srotaāpatti-phala-bhūmau sthito na kāṅkṣati na vicikitsati svakāyāṃ bhūmāv evaṃ sakṛdāgāmy-anāgāmy-arhattva-bhūmau sthito buddha-bhūmau sthito na kāṅkṣati na vicikitsati, evam eva Subhūte bodhisatvo mahāsatvaḥ svakāyāṃ bhūmau na kāṅkṣati na vicikitsati.* (Pañca-Kimura 1990, p. 159.)[149]

As the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature describes the three *yāna*s it validates the accomplishments associated with each level of the two *yāna*s. Nonetheless, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature's recognition of the progressive development of the cultivation in the two *yāna*s effectively highlights the qualities that set the two *yāna*s apart from Mahāyāna. For example:

> *aviṣayo 'trâyuṣmaṃc chāradvatīputra sarva-śrāvaka-pratyekabuddhānāṃ bodhisatvānāṃ mahāsatvānāṃ /9/ prajñāpāramitām upadeṣṭum* \\ (Pañca-Gilgit, vol. 10(3), f. 40a8-40a9.)[150]

In this way the dharma of the *prajñāpāramitā* stands as the most salient quality that differentiates the assured, or advanced, Bodhisattvas' Mahāyāna from the two *yāna*s.

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149. Pañca-Gilgit, vol. 10(5), f. 200b8-200b9: *tad yathâpi nāma subhūte puruṣaḥ srota-āpatti-phale bhūmau sthito na kāṃkṣati na vicikitsati\ svakāyāṃ bhūmau yāvad buddha-bhūmau sthito na [kāṃkṣati] /9/ na vicikitsati\ evam eva subhūte bodhisatvo mahāsatva[ḥ] svakāyāṃ bhūmau sthito na kāṃkṣati na vicikitsati* *T*. 220(2), vol. 7, pp. 267a-b: 如預流者住預流果，於自果法無惑無疑，一來、不還、阿羅漢、獨覺、及諸如來應正等覺各住自果，於自 果法亦無惑無疑，是菩薩摩訶薩亦復如是，於自所住不退轉地所攝諸法，現知現見、無惑無疑 . LSPW, p. 401: "Just as a man who stands on the stage of a Streamwinner has no hesitation or doubts about it if that is the stage which is his by right, and so up *to*: the Buddha-stage. Just so the Bodhisattva, when he stands on the stage which is his own by right, has no hesitations or doubts about it."

150. LSPW, p. 89: "[I]t is outside the province of all the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas to expound the perfection of wisdom to the Bodhisattvas, the great beings." *T*. 220(1), vol. 5, p. 56b: 甚深般若波羅蜜多相應之法非諸聲聞獨覺境界 . See also and cf. *T*. 222, vol. 8, p. 162b; *T*. 221, vol. 8, p. 11b; *T*. 220(2), vol. 7, p. 29a; *T*. 220(3), vol. 7, p. 447a; Pañca-Dutt, p. 99.

While continuing to stress the superiority of the assured Bodhisattvas in their cultivation of the *prajñāpāramitā* over followers of the two *yāna*s, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature nonetheless emphasizes the relevance of the *prajñāpāramitā* for all Buddhist practitioners. Numerous instances in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature set apart the assured Bodhisattvas who are versed in the *prajñāpāramit* from followers of the two *yāna*s. However, the dharma of the *prajñāpāramitā* is also open to followers of the two *yāna*s, and if they are willing to cultivate the *prajñāpāramitā*, they can attain perfection too. The following passage establishes the key point:

> *api tu khalu punaḥ Subhūte etayā prajñāpāramitayā sarva-śrāvaka-pratyekabuddhā bodhisattvāś ca mahāsattvās tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyaksaṃbuddhāḥ pāraṅgatās tenârthena prajñāpāramitêty ucyate.* (Pañca-Kimura 1992, p. 127.)[151]

This passage's definition of the term *prajñāpāramitā* gives equal weight to the practice of all Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Tathāgatas. By definition, the *prajñāpāramitā* is the dharma through which individuals of the three *yāna*s can reach the other shore (*pāraṃ gatā gacchanti gamiṣyanti*) (Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1962, p. 151). While the *prajñāpāramitā* accommodates the dharmas of the three *yāna*s (cf. footnotes

151. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 338b: 復次，善現！由深般若波羅蜜多，聲聞、獨覺、菩薩、如來能到彼岸，故名般若波羅蜜多． LSPW, p. 520: "Furthermore it is through this perfection of wisdom that all Disciples, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Tathagatas have gone beyond all dharmas, do go beyond, will go beyond -- in that sense one speaks of 'perfection of wisdom.'" See also and cf. Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1962, p. 151. A further example is provided by LSPW, p. 542: It is thus that the Bodhisattva should course in the perfection of wisdom in which all the paths are contained, as well as the dharmas which act as wings to enlightenment, in which the Bodhisattva, the great being should course, just as do the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas. See also and cf. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 350a; Pañca-Kimura 1992, p. 157; Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1962, p. 186.

140-141) and is accessible to all in the Buddhist tradition (cf. footnote 151), it simultaneously differentiates the assured Mahāyāna from the two *yāna*s (cf. footnote 150). Many practitioners may find the two *yāna*s more readily accessible or simply cannot aspire to *prajñāpāramitā* at least for the foreseeable future. The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature lays down the set of the three *yāna*s in ways that both acknowledge the diversity of sentient beings' spiritual needs and hold the Arhatship and the enlightenment of the Pratyekabuddha in high esteem as the two greatest achievements possible through the two *yāna*s. One of the best descriptions of what this three-*yāna* scheme comes to is found in the following passage:

> *evaṃ khalu Subhūte bodhisattvena mahāsattvena prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caratā sattvāḥ paripācayitavyā. yathā paripācyamānās tribhyopāyebhyaḥ parimucyante. yāvat saṃsārāt parimucyante.* (Aṣṭādaśa-Gilgit 1974, p. 97.)[152]

It is important to be clear that one of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature's central purposes is to make the Buddhist religion available to the broadest possible audience. The three-*yāna* scheme, including the three kinds of *samyaktva-niyāma* (cf. footnote 118) and the attainment of Nirvāṇa through the three *yāna*s (cf. footnote 148), therefore create diverse paths to liberation and enlightenment which respond to the multiplicity of dedicated practitioners. This scheme takes into account the variations in individual temperaments and holds that no single *yāna* can serve the religious needs of

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152. LSPW, p. 614: "It is thus that a Bodhisattva, who courses in the perfection of wisdom, should mature beings in such a way that they are (gradually) liberated by the triple device, until in the end they are set free from Samsara." See also and cf. *T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 409a-b.

all sentient beings. There are a variety of Buddhist *yāna*s, each with various levels in itself. The framework of the three kinds of *samyaktva-niyāma* is at once an intra-*yānic* and an inter-*yānic* device that differentiates such varied levels of spiritual development. Because all Buddhist *yāna*s exhibit at least two levels, one assured, and the other non-assured, it is no longer appropriate to define or characterize Mahāyāna as a whole by contrasting it with the so-called Hīnayāna in its entirety.

From an intra-*yānic* perspective, attainment of the level of certainty (*niyāma*) assures a practitioner's pursuit of the major goal(s) in whatever *yāna* he/she has adopted. The term *samyaktva-niyāma* affirms that each of the three *yāna*s contains a turning point at which the practitioner is able to ascertain the eventual achievement of the major goal(s) of each *yāna*. This perspective acknowledges the respective importance of the two *yāna*s and neither debases nor invalidates them.

From an inter-*yānic* perspective, the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* qualifies the assured Mahāyāna on at least two conditions: sufficient training in the two *yāna*s, and appropriate cultivation of the *prajñāpāramitā* which centers on *śūnyatā* and culminates in *anupalambha*. The assured Mahāyāna is built both into and on the two *yāna*s and therefore has no reason to assume an antagonistic relationship with them. The set of the three *yāna*s, more than it is possible for Mahāyāna alone, accommodates sentient beings' different religious needs and goals. Finally, Bodhisattvas are not invariably superior to

individuals of the two *yānas*; novice Bodhisattvas and non-assured Bodhisattvas are considered inferior to the assured practitioners of the two *yānas* in terms of whether or not they attain certainty in their spiritual cultivation.



CONCLUSION: THE COMPLEX CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY MAHĀYĀNA

This work investigates our present day understanding of early Mahāyāna. It evaluates how scholarly frameworks for the development of early Mahāyāna shape our selection of decumentary evidence and influence our readings of individual documents. I emphasize what is required of a study of early Mahāyāna: documentary diversity and documentary applicability combined with a sensitivity to the context of individual documents. Therefore, this research perceives early Mahāyāna by way of a wide range of documents, questioning theories of a unilinear tradition through depiction of diverse activities, practices, and doctrines.

The Mahāyāna tradition is made up of multiple occurrences, and the Mahāyāna perspective is expressed in a variety of documentary mediums. In particular, textual evidence is no less actual than epigraphical. Each of the relevant mediums makes its characteristic contribution to the outlook of the Mahāyāna tradition, and each also has its characteristic limitations. A

comprehensive understanding of Mahāyāna must be based not on any one documentary medium but rather on an appreciation of the various forms of documents within this tradition.

In order to investigate the dimension of current dialogue regarding early Mahāyāna, the origin-discourse was presented first. Although we can never be certain about Mahāyāna's origins, I argue that this discourse can only be construed properly by clarifying the meaning of the term "origins" and of the expression the "origins of Mahāyāna." Linear notions of development dominate this discourse and shape scholarly interpretation of what constitutes early Mahāyāna and what does not. The concept of Proto-Mahāyāna is an example of an analytical scheme that arose out of linear notions of development.

Individual documentary definitions of Mahāyāna lend us the clearest vision of the greatness of Mahāyāna. I draw on the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras and demonstrate that the greatness of Mahāyāna lies not in its contrast with Hīnayāna but in its practices and achievements. One thing is clear in my findings: the answer to the question of the greatness of Mahāyāna is not "It is the opposite of Hīnayāna." The *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras define Mahāyāna as a series of practices in which both Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna are incorporated. Although the term Hīnayāna is important in several later textual and historical materials, it is one of the most overrated indicators of the study of early Mahāyāna. Aside from the *Lotus Sūtra*, few scriptures in

the early Mahāyāna period highlight the contrast between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. Like many other early Mahāyāna scriptures, the *Lotus Sūtra* refers to Hīna or Hīnayāna primarily as a descriptive term, not as such a technical term as the terms Mahāyāna, Bodhisattvayāna, Śrāvakayāna, and Pratyekabuddhayāna. The term Hīnayāna rarely occurs in early Chinese translations of Mahāyāna scriptures. Instead, in many cases the scriptures relate to Mahāyāna in contradistinction to the two *yāna*s, Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna. This contradistinction also applies to the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the triad of *yāna*s is explained by the famous parable of the three carriages drawn by a goat, deer, and ox respectively. Therefore, I propose that a study of early Mahāyāna does not have to begin with a comparison between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna.

I do not claim that early Mahāyāna of the type described in this work has remained unchanged or monolithic from the period of our earliest extant documents. The Mahāyāna tradition has undergone profound changes, and new definitions of Mahāyāna have come into existence. However, if we are to understand early Mahāyāna, we need to have a clear view of its own definitions on the basis of our earliest extant documents. The wide range of documentary evidence diversifies our notion of Mahāyāna, as well as what constitutes the greatness of this *yāna*. Our inclusion of the plurality of definitions of Mahāyāna pierces through sweeping essentialist constructions of Mahāyāna. In particular, this work resists the practice of defining

Mahāyāna through comparison with other *yāna*s. Such comparisons assume essentialist, developmental differences between the *yāna*s that potentially oversimplify our characterization of Mahāyāna. Moreover, contrast does not provide a valid substitute for definition. Early Mahāyāna scriptures do not specify whether such terms as Śrāvakayāna and Hīnayāna denote the Sectarian schools. Defining Mahāyāna in comparison to the Sectarian schools risks assuming an essentialized Hīnayāna and inserting a questionable interpretation.

While the above methodology clarifies our interpretation of indisputably Mahāyāna documents, it also challenges us to confront the ambiguities of documents that neither mention the term "Mahāyāna," define this term, nor expound on its characteristics, what I call "seemingly Mahāyāna" or "non-specifically Mahāyāna." Yāna classifications inappropriately imposed on seemingly or non-specifically Mahāyāna documents are another problem resulting from frameworks of linear development. These theoretical frameworks not only limit how scholars identify Mahāyāna documents but also reflect a constrained definition of Mahāyāna. There is a clear need for an approach that relates seemingly or non-specifically Mahāyāna documents to the Mahāyāna tradition without assuming universal *yāna* classification or essentializing the notion of Mahāyāna. In order to challenge essentialized assumptions of Mahāyāna this study interprets some of the strands of documents that seemingly or non-specifically bear on the Mahāyāna tradition.

By challenging the criteria by which scholars measure the development of early Mahāyāna, this inquiry problematizes our assumptions about Mahāyāna's evolution.

I use the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* to create a new characterization of Mahāyāna, i.e., that of the assured Mahāyāna. Through providing means for a fresh inquiry into the dynamics of the three *yāna*s, the term *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* allows us to view a distinct panorama of the Mahāyāna tradition. The *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras recognize three kinds of *samyaktva-niyāma* in connection with the three *yāna*s. Therefore, each *yāna* has its own turning point where a practitioner enters into the certainty of pursuing what is right for the individual *yāna*. In particular, a Bodhisattva is required to train in all the paths in order to enter into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*. The three *yāna*s, including their practices and doctrines, are thus brought together in the Bodhisattva's career toward the attainment of the *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* and, finally, of the utmost right and perfect enlightenment. Although *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* connects the three *yāna*s, it distinguishes Mahāyāna from the two *yāna*s at least in two manners. First, those who have not entered into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, especially Bodhisattvas who have newly set out in the conveyance (*nava-yāna-saṃprasthita-bodhisattva*), are considered inferior to the assured practitioners of the two *yāna*s in terms of assurance as well as in terms of the eradication of defilements. Second, a practitioner cannot enter into

bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma without transcending the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. After entering into *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma*, a practitioner becomes an assured Bodhisattva and distinguishes himself/herself from the two *yāna*s especially in terms of the cultivation of the *prajñāpāramitā*. It is *bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma* that characterizes the assured Mahāyāna in which great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) plays little role. From the perspective of the scheme of three kinds of *samyaktva-niyāma*, each of the three *yāna*s contains at least two levels, one assured, and the other non-assured. It is therefore inappropriate to define or characterize Mahāyāna as a whole by contrasting it with the so-called Hīnayāna in its entirety.

APPENDIX 1

The Definition of the Term Bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma

善現答言：若諸菩薩無方便善巧而行六波羅蜜多，無方便善巧住三解脱門，墮於聲聞或獨覺地，不入菩薩正性離生，如是名為菩薩頂墮，即此頂墮亦名為生．

時舍利子即復問言：何緣菩薩頂墮名生？

善現答言：生謂法愛．若諸菩薩順道法愛，説名為生．

舍利子言：何謂菩薩順道法愛？

善現答曰：若菩薩摩訶薩修行般若波羅蜜多時，於色住空而起想著，．．．若菩薩摩訶薩作是念言，是色應斷，．．．是菩薩生、是菩薩離生．舍利子！若菩薩摩訶薩修行般若波羅蜜多時，住如是等法而生想著，是為菩薩順道法愛．如是法愛，説名為生，如宿食生，能為過患．

時舍利子問善現言：云何菩薩摩訶薩入正性離生？

善現答言：若菩薩摩訶薩修行般若波羅蜜多時，不見內空、不待內空、而觀外空，不見外空、不待外空、而觀內空，不待外空、而觀內外空，不見內外空、不待內外空、而觀外空，不待內外空、而觀空空，不見空空、不待空空、而觀內外空，不待空空、而觀大空，不見大空、不待大空、而觀空空，不待大空、而觀勝義空，不見勝義空、不待勝義空、而觀大空，不待勝義空、而觀有為空，不見有為空，不待有為空、而觀勝義空，不待有為空、而觀無為空，不見無為空、不待無為空、而觀有為空，不待無為空、而觀畢竟空，不見畢竟空、不待畢竟空、而觀無為空，不待畢竟空、而觀無際空，不見無際空、不待無際空、而觀畢竟空，不待無際空、而觀散空，不見散空、不待散空、而觀無際空，不待散空、而觀無變異空，不見無變異空、不待無變異空、而觀散空，不待無變異空、而觀本性空，不見本性空、不待本性空、而觀無變異空，不待本性空、而觀自相空，不見自相空、不待自相空、而觀本性空，不待自相空、而觀共相空，不見共相空、不待共相空、而觀自相空，不待共相空、而觀一切法空，不見一切法空、不待一切法空、而觀共相空，不待一切法空、而觀不可得空，不見不可得空、不待不可得空、而觀一切法空，不待不可得空、而觀無性空，不見無性空、不待無性空、而觀不可得空，不待無性空、而觀自性空，不見自性空、不待自性空、而觀無性空，不待自性空、而觀無性自性空，不見無性自性空、不待無性自性空、而觀自性空．舍利子！菩薩摩訶薩修行般若波羅蜜多時，若作是觀，名入菩薩正性離生．(*T*. 220(1), vol. 5, pp. 200c-201b.)

善現答言：．．．退墮聲聞或獨覺地，不入菩薩正性離生，如是名為菩薩頂墮．

時舍利子問善現言：何者名生？

善現對曰：生謂法愛．

舍利子言：何謂法愛？

善現對曰：若菩薩摩訶薩修行般若波羅蜜多，安住色空而起想著，．．．若菩薩摩訶薩作如是念，此色應斷，．．．此是菩薩生、此是菩薩離生．舍利子！若菩薩摩訶薩修行般若波羅蜜多時，安住此等種種法門而起想著，是為菩薩摩訶薩順道法愛．即此法愛，説名為生，如宿食生，能為過患．

爾時具壽舍利子問具壽善現言：云何菩薩摩訶薩入正性離生？

善現對曰：．．．作如是觀，名入菩薩正性離生．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, pp. 43c-44c.)

善現答言：．．．退墮聲聞或獨覺地，不得菩薩正決定位，不入菩薩正性離生，如是名為菩薩頂墮．

時舍利子問善現言：何法名生?

善現答言：生謂菩薩隨順法愛．

舍利子言：何謂菩薩隨順法愛?

善現答言：若諸菩薩修行般若波羅蜜多，安住色空起想起著，．．．若諸菩薩作是念言，此色應斷，．．．此是菩薩生、此是菩薩離生．舍利子！若菩薩摩訶薩修行般若波羅蜜多時，安住此等種種法門起想起著，是為菩薩順道法愛．即此法愛，說名為生，如宿食生，能為過患．除遣此故，名為離生．

時舍利子問善現言：云何菩薩摩訶薩名入菩薩正性離生?

善現對曰：．．．作如是觀，名入菩薩正性離生．(*T.* 220(3), vol. 7, pp. 455b-456b.)

舍利弗謂須菩提：何謂菩薩生不純淑?

須菩提謂舍利弗：所以曰不純淑者，謂愛著法也．

又曰：舍利弗！菩薩摩訶薩行般若波羅蜜，立於色空而知想識有所依倚，．．．某是菩薩入寂然、某是菩薩生不純淑．

須菩提謂舍利弗：說菩薩行般若波羅蜜，住此建立如是諸法而知想識有所依倚，是謂菩薩摩訶薩柔順法忍之愛著生不純淑．

舍利弗謂須菩提：何謂菩薩摩訶薩寂然?

須菩提謂舍利弗：．．．能如是者，則菩薩至於寂然．(*T.* 222, vol. 8, pp. 165c-166b.)

須菩提報言：．．．墮聲聞辟支佛地，亦不順菩薩道，是為菩薩頂諍．

舍利弗問須菩提：何以故名為菩薩頂諍?

須菩提報言：所謂法愛是．

問言：何等為法愛?

須菩提報言：．．．菩薩行般若波羅蜜，入法中計校分別，是為菩薩順法愛．

舍利弗與須菩提言：何等為菩薩順道?

須菩提報言：．．．菩薩作是行般若波羅蜜，轉上便應菩薩之道．(*T.* 221, vol. 8, p. 13a-b.)

須菩提言舍利弗：若菩薩摩訶薩不以方便行六波羅蜜，入空無相無作三昧，不墮聲聞辟支佛地，亦不入菩薩位，是名菩薩摩訶薩法愛生故頂墮．

舍利弗問須菩提：云何名菩薩生?

須菩提答舍利弗言：生名法愛．

舍利弗言：何等法愛?

須菩提言：．．．是菩薩熟、是非菩薩熟．舍利弗！菩薩摩訶薩行般若波羅蜜，是諸法受念著，是為菩薩摩訶薩順道法愛生．

舍利弗問須菩提：云何名菩薩摩訶薩無生?

須菩提言：．．．菩薩摩訶薩行般若波羅蜜，得入菩薩位．(*T.* 223, vol. 8, p. 233a-c.)

See also and cf. Pañca-Dutt, pp. 119-121.

Subhuti: When he courses without skill in means in the six perfections. One speaks of the Rawness of a Bodhisattva if, having entered on the concentrations of Emptiness, the Signless, and the Wishless, he does not fall on the level of a Disciple or a Pratyekabuddha, but, being unskilled in means, also does not enter into a Bodhisattva's (distinctive) Way of Salvation.

Śāriputra: For what reason is that called a Bodhisattva's "Rawness"?

Subhuti: A Bodhisattva's craving for (separate) dharmas is called "Rawness".

Śāriputra: What is the craving for (separate) dharmas?

Subhuti: Here a Bodhisattva, who courses in perfect wisdom, settles down in the idea that "form, etc., is impermanent", insists on it and holds it to be true. This is called the Rawness of Adaptable Craving for separate dharmas on the part of a Bodhisattva. And . . . If a Bodhisattva, who courses in perfect wisdom, settles down in these dharmas, insists on them, holds them to be truly real, that is the Rawness of his acting in conformity with the craving for separate dharmas.

Śāriputra: What is the Ripening of a Bodhisattva?

Subhuti: Here a Bodhisattva, who courses in perfect wisdom, does not review the subjective-objective emptiness in the subjective emptiness, nor the subjective in the objective, nor the subjective-objective in the objective, nor the objective in the subjective, nor the emptiness of emptiness in the subjective emptiness, and so on for all the kinds of emptiness. It is thus that a Bodhisattva, who courses in perfect wisdom, enters into the Ripening of a Bodhisattva. (LSPW, pp. 95-96.)

APPENDIX 2

Milestones on the Bodhisattva Path

T. 220(2)	Sketch
諸菩薩摩訶薩從初發心修行六種波羅蜜多，住空、無相、無願之法，即能超過一切聲聞獨覺等地，能得菩薩不退轉地，能淨佛道．(p. 13a)	the six pāramitās, etc./ transcending the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ reaching the Bodhisattva's irreversible level/ purifying the path to Buddhahood//
諸菩薩摩訶薩於一切法無所執著修行般若波羅蜜多時，增益布施波羅蜜多，增益淨戒、安忍、精進、靜慮、般若波羅蜜多，趣入菩薩正性離生，趣入菩薩不退轉地．(p. 32c)	the six pāramitās/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ the Bodhisattva's irreversible level//
不應住作是念「我修加行既圓滿已當入菩薩正性離生」，不應住作是念「我已得入正性離生常住菩薩不退轉地」．(p. 137b)	prayoga (intensified effort)/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ the Bodhisattva's irreversible level//
不應住作是念「我超聲聞獨覺地已住菩薩地」．(p. 137c)	the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-bhūmi//
由此復能超聲聞地及獨覺地，證入菩薩正性離生．(p. 164b)	the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma//
菩薩種性補特伽羅亦依般若波羅蜜多精勤修學，超諸聲聞及獨覺地，證入菩薩正性離生，漸次修行諸菩薩行，得住菩薩不退轉地．(p. 165c)	prajñāpāramitā/ the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ the Bodhisattva's irreversible level//
若依彼法精勤修學，得預流果、一來、不還、阿羅漢果，得獨覺菩提，得入菩薩正性離生、及餘菩薩摩訶薩行．(p. 174c)	srotâpatti-phala/ sakṛdāgāmi-phala/ anāgāmi-phala/ arhattva-phala/ pratyeka-bodhi/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma, etc.//
若依彼法精勤修學，得預流果、一來、不還、阿羅漢果、獨覺菩提，得入菩薩正性離生．(p. 180c)	srotâpatti-phala/ sakṛdāgāmi-phala/ anāgāmi-phala/ arhattva-phala/ pratyeka-bodhi/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma//
無量無數無邊有情於中修學，得預流果、一來、不還、阿羅漢果；無量無數無邊有情於中修學，得獨覺菩提；無量無數無邊有情於中修學，得入菩薩正性離生，證得無上正等菩提．(p. 201a)	srotâpatti-phala/ sakṛdāgāmi-phala/ anāgāmi-phala/ arhattva-phala/ pratyeka-bodhi/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ the unsurpassed enlightenment//
菩薩未入正性離生，不應授彼大菩提記；若授彼記，增彼憍逸，有損無益，故不為記．(p. 216a)	bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ vyākaraṇa (prediction)//

當知如是住菩薩乘諸善男子善女人等，終不中道損耗退敗，超聲聞地及獨覺地，成熟有情，嚴淨佛土，疾證無上正等菩提．(pp. 241a-242a)

transcending the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ maturing sentient beings/ purifying the Buddha-field/ attaining the unsurpassed enlightenment//

由能攝受甚深般若波羅蜜多、方便善巧、具諸功德，不墮聲聞及獨覺地，疾證無上正等菩提．(pp. 243a-244a)

prajñāpāramitā, upāya-kauśalya, etc./ the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ the unsurpassed enlightenment//

諸菩薩乘補特伽羅不離一切智智心，攝受般若波羅蜜多，依方便善巧，大悲心為上首，修空無相無願之法，雖証實際，而能入菩薩正性離生位，能證無上正等菩提．(p. 256a)

prajñāpāramitā, upāya-kauśalya, etc./ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ the unsurpassed enlightenment//

如是不退轉菩薩摩訶薩以自相空觀一切法，已入菩薩正性離生．(p. 264b)

bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ the Bodhisattva's irreversible level

由此六種波羅蜜多隨分圓滿，已入菩薩正性離生，復正修行布施、淨戒、安忍、精進、靜慮、般若般羅蜜多，由此得住不退轉地．(p. 264c)

the six pāramitās (partly)/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ the six pāramitās (intensively)/ the Bodhisattva's irreversible level//

是菩薩摩訶薩其心堅固，超諸世間天、人、魔、梵、阿素洛等，已入菩薩正性離生，住不退地．(p. 267b)

transcending the world with its gods, men, Māras, Brahma gods, Asuras, etc./ entering into bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ standing on the Bodhisattva's irreversible level//

諸菩薩摩訶薩行深般若波羅蜜多，超諸聲聞及獨覺地，速入菩薩正性離生：復漸修行諸菩薩行，速證無上正等菩提．(p. 270b)

prajñāpāramitā/ the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ keeping practicing bodhisattva-caryā/ the unsurpassed enlightenment//

若菩薩摩訶薩能如是行，不為一切世間天、人、阿素洛等之所降伏，亦復不為聲聞獨覺之所降伏，而能伏彼，是菩薩摩訶薩已得安住無能伏位，謂菩薩離生位，恆住一切智智作意，不可屈伏，則為鄰近一切智智，疾證無上正等菩提．(p. 289c)

neither crushed by the whole world with its gods, etc., nor surpassed by any of the Śrāvakas or Pratyekabuddhas/ standing on the insuperable position, i.e., bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ near sarvajña-jñāna/ the unsurpassed enlightenment//

是菩薩摩訶薩行深般若波羅蜜多已得究竟，安住菩薩不退轉地，疾證無上正等菩提，普為有情作大饒益．(p. 291a)

prajñāpāramitā/ the Bodhisattva's irreversible level/ the unsurpassed enlightenment, etc.//

是菩薩摩訶薩亦於一切聲聞獨覺功德善根能攝能得，然於其中無住無著，以勝智見正觀察已，超過聲聞及獨覺地，趣入菩薩正性離生故，此菩薩摩訶薩眾無有一切功德善根而不攝得．(p. 301a)

the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma//

諸菩薩摩訶薩亦復如是，安住真如修菩薩行，速

bodhisattva-caryā/ the Bodhisattva's

當安住不退轉地，疾證無上正等菩提，轉妙法輪，度有情眾．(p. 309c)

irreversible level/ the unsurpassed enlightenment, etc.//

諸菩薩摩訶薩住此住中，超諸聲聞獨覺等地，證入菩薩正性離生，能速圓滿一切佛法，永斷煩惱習氣相續，能疾証得一切智智，得名如來應正等覺，能常利樂一切有情．(pp. 310c-311a)

the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ sarvajña-jñāna, etc.//

若不能圓滿布施波羅蜜多、乃至般若波羅蜜多，云何能入菩薩正性離生？若不能入菩薩正性離生，云何能成熟有情？若不能成熟有情，云何能嚴淨佛土？若不能嚴淨佛土，云何能得一切智智？若不能得一切智智，云何能轉正法輪、作諸佛事？(p. 335a)

the six pāramitās/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ maturing sentient beings/ purifying the Buddha-field/ sarvajña-jñāna, etc.//

是菩薩摩訶薩成就最勝方便善巧，恒時增長覺分善根：由此善根常增長故，能行一切菩提分法，超諸聲聞獨覺等地，趣入菩薩正性離生，是名菩薩無生法忍：由此忍故，常能自在成熟有情、嚴淨佛土．(p. 346b)

with the help of upāya-kauśalya, practicing dharmas which act as wings to enlightenment/ transcending the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ entring into bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma, i.e., bodhisattva-anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti/ maturing sentient beings/ purifying the Buddha-field//

諸菩薩摩訶薩不由聲聞道、不由獨覺道、不由如來道得入菩薩正性離生，然於諸道遍學滿已，由菩薩道得入菩薩正性離生．(p. 349a)

śrāvaka-mārga, pratyekabuddha-mārga, tathāgata-mārga, bodhisattva-mārga/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma//

諸菩薩摩訶薩從初發心勇猛精進，修行六種波羅蜜多，以勝智見超過八地，謂淨觀地乃至獨覺地：雖於如是所説八地皆遍修學，而能以勝智見超過，由道相智得入菩薩正性離生：已入菩薩正性離生，漸次復由一切相智證得圓滿一切智智，永斷一切習氣相續．(p. 349b)

practicing the six pāramitās/ going beyond the eight stages, i.e. śukla-vidarśanā-bhūmi, gotra-bhūmi, aṣṭamaka-bhūmi, darśana-bhūmi, tanu-bhūmi, vītarāga-bhūmi, kṛtāvi-bhūmi, and pratyekabuddha-bhūmi/ entring into bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ sarvâkāra-jñatā, sarvajña-jñāna, etc.//

若菩薩摩訶薩不能修般若波羅蜜多，應不能超諸聲聞地及獨覺地：若不能超諸聲聞地及獨覺地，應不能入菩薩正性離生：若不能入菩薩正性離生，應不能起菩薩無生法忍：若不能起菩薩無生法忍，應不能發菩薩勝妙神通：若不能發菩薩勝妙神通，應不能嚴淨佛土、成熟有情：若不能嚴淨佛土、成熟有情，應不能證得一切智智：若不能証得一切智智，應不能轉妙法輪．(p. 351b-c)

prajñāpāramitā/ the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ the Bodhisattva's irreversible level/ bodhisattva-abhijñā/ purifying the Buddha-field, maturing sentient beings/ sarvajña-jñāna, etc.//

因修聖道，斷諸煩惱．由此煩惱所覆障故，尚不能證聲聞獨覺相應之地，況入菩薩正性離生．若不能入菩薩正性離生，豈能證得一切智智．(p. 353b)

the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ sarvajña-jñāna//

由施乃至解脱智見蘊圓滿故，超諸聲聞及獨覺地，証入菩薩正性離生：既入菩薩正性離生，成熟有情、嚴淨佛土：作此事已，証得無上正等菩提，轉妙法輪．(pp. 355a-356a)

the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ maturing sentient beings, purifying the Buddha-field/ the unsurpassed

	enlightenment, etc.//
是菩薩摩訶薩安住靜慮波羅蜜多，修三十七菩提分法及道相智，皆令圓滿，用道相智攝受一切三摩地已，漸次修超淨觀地乃至獨覺地，証入菩薩正性離生：既入菩薩正性離生，修諸地行，圓滿佛地．(p. 362b-c)	dhyānapāramitā, etc./ going beyond the eight stages/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ bodhisattva-bhūmi/ buddha-bhūmi//
既能圓滿無相淨戒波羅蜜多，速入菩薩正性離生：既入菩薩正性離生，復得菩薩無生法忍．(p. 365a)	śīlapāramitā/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ the Bodhisattva's irreversible level//
是菩薩摩訶薩由住此空，超諸聲聞獨覺等地，證入菩薩正性離生．p. 366c)	śūnyatā/ the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas/ bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma//
由諸善法得圓滿故，漸次引生諸無漏法：由無漏法，得預流果、或一來果、或不還果、或阿羅漢果、或獨覺菩提，或有趣入諸菩薩地，漸得無上正等菩提．(p. 407c)	srotâpatti-phala/ sakṛdāgāmi-phala/ anāgāmi-phala/ arhattva-phala/ pratyeka-bodhi/ bodhisattva-bhūmi/ the unsurpassed enlightenment//
於一切法無所得時，則如實見一切法空，謂如實見四諦所攝及所不攝諸法皆空：如是見時，能入菩薩正性離生：由能入菩薩正性離生故，便住菩薩種性地中．(p. 419b)	śūnyatā/ entering into bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma, becoming established on the bodhisattva-gotra-bhūmi//
若不能行甚深般若波羅蜜多，則應不能從一菩薩地至一菩薩地：若定不能從一菩薩地至一菩薩地，則應不能趣入菩薩正性離生：若定不能趣入菩薩正性離生，則應不能超諸聲聞及獨覺地．(p. 424c)	lacking prajñāpāramitā/ without bodhisattva-bhūmi/ without bodhisattva-samyaktva-niyāma/ unable to transcend the levels of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas//

APPENDIX 3

The Bodhisattva's Training in a Multiplicity of Dharmas

T. 220(2) (p. 7b-c)	Pañca-Gilgit (f. 8b-9a)	Pañca-Dutt (p. 19-21)
復次，舍利子！諸菩薩摩訶薩安住般若波羅蜜多，以無所得而為方便，應修習四念住、四正斷、四神足、五根、五力、七等覺支、八聖道支，是三十七菩提分法不可得故．	prajñāpā/4/ramitāyāṃ śāradvatīputra sthitvā bodhisatvena mahāsatvena catvāri smṛtyupasthānāni paripūrayitavyāni smṛty-anupalabdhitām upādāya\ evaṃ catvāri samya/5/kprahāṇāni\ catvāra ṛddhi-pādāḥ paṃcêndriyāṇi paṃca-balāni sapta-bodhy-aṅgāny āryâṣṭâṃgo mārgaḥ paripūrayitavyaḥ\	evaṃ prajñāpāramitāyāṃ śāriputra sthitvā bodhisattvena mahāsattvena catvāri smṛtyupasthānāni paripūrayitavyāni catvāri samyakprahāṇāni catvāra ṛddhi-pādāḥ pañcêndriyāṇi pañca-balāni sapta-bodhy-aṅgāni āryâṣṭâṅga-mārgaḥ paripūrayitavyaḥ\
以無所得而為方便，應修習空三摩地、無相三摩地、無願三摩地，是三等持不可得故．	śunyatā samādhir ā/6/nimittaḥ samādhir apraṇihitaḥ samādhiḥ paripūrayitavyaḥ	śūnyatā-samādhir bhāvayitavyaḥ\ animitta-samādhir bhāvayitavyaḥ\ apraṇihita-samādhir bhāvayitavyaḥ\
以無所得而為方便，應修習四靜慮、四無量、四無色定，靜慮無量及無色定不可得故．	catvāri dhyānāni catvāry apramāṇāni\ catasraḥ ārūpya-samāpattayaḥ /7/	evaṃ catvāri dhyānāni catvāry apramāṇāni catasra ārūpya-samāpattayaḥ
以無所得而為方便，應修習八解脱、八勝處、九次第定、十遍處，解脱勝處等至遍處不可得故．	aṣṭau vimokṣā navânupūrva-sa[mā]pattayaḥ	aṣṭau vimokṣāḥ navânupūrva-vihāra-samāpattayaḥ
以無所得而為方便，應修習九想，謂膨脹想、膿爛想、異赤想、青瘀想、啄噉想、離散想、骸骨想、焚燒想、滅壞想，如是諸想不可得故．	paṃcâbhijñā nava-saṃjñāḥ vyādhyātmaka-saṃjñāḥ vipaṭumaka-saṃjñā\ vipūtika-saṃjñāḥ vilohitaka-saṃjñāḥ vinīla/8/ka-saṃjñāḥ vikhāditaka-saṃjñāḥ vikṣiptaka-saṃjñāḥ asthika-saṃjñāḥ vidagdhaka-saṃjñāḥ	navâśubhāḥ saṃjñā bhāvayitavyāḥ\ katamā nava\ yaduta ādhmātaka-saṃjñā vidhūtaka-saṃjñā vipūyaka-saṃjñā vilo(p. 20)hitaka-saṃjñā vinīlaka-saṃjñā vikhāditaka-saṃjñā vikṣiptaka-saṃjñā vidagdhaka saṃjñā asthi-saṃjñā\ āhāre pratikūla-saṃjñā bhāvayitavyā\
以無所得而為方便，應修習十隨念，謂佛隨念、法隨念、僧隨念、戒隨念、	buddhânusmṛtir dharmânusmṛtiḥ saṃghânusmṭiḥ śīlânusmṛtiḥs	buddhânusmṛtir bhāvayitavyā\ [dharmânusmṛtir

捨隨念、天隨念、入出息隨念、厭隨念、死隨念、身隨念，是諸隨念不可得故．(p. 7c)	tyāgânusmṛti/9/r devatânusmṛtir ānāpānânusmṛtir udvegânusmṛtir maraṇânusmṛtiḥ kāya-gatânusmṛtiḥ	bhāvayitavyā\] saṃghânusmṛtir bhāvayitavyā\ śīlânusmṛtir bhāvayitavyā\ tyāgânusmṛtir bhāvayitavyā\ devatânusmṛtir bhāvayitavyā\ ānāpānânusmṛtir bhāvayitavyā\ udvegânusmṛtir bhāvayitavyā\ maraṇânusmṛtir bhāvayitavyā\
以無所得而為方便，應修習十想，謂無常想、苦想、無我想、不淨想、死想、一切世間不可樂想、厭食想、斷想、離想、滅想，如是諸想不可得故．	anitya-saṃjñā duḥkha-saṃjñā\ anātma-saṃjñā\ aśubha-saṃjñā maraṇa-saṃjñā /10/ sarvatra loke anabhirati-saṃjñā\ sarvatra loke aviśvāsa-saṃjñā\	anitya-saṃjñā bhāvayitavyā\ duḥkha-saṃjñā bhāvayitavyā\ anātma-saṃjñā bhāvayitavyā\ aśuci-saṃjñā bhāvayitavyā\ maraṇa-saṃjñā bhāvayitavyā\ sarva-loke anabhirati-saṃjñā bhāvayitavyā\ sarva-loke aviśvāsa-saṃjñā bhāvayitavyā\
以無所得而為方便，應修習十一智，謂苦智、集智、滅智、道智、盡智、無生智、法智、類智、世俗智、他心智、如説智，如是諸智不可得故．	duḥkha-jñānaṃ samudaya-jñānaṃ nirodha-jñānaṃ mārga-jñānaṃ kṣaya-jñānam anutpāda-jñānaṃ dharma-/11/jñānam anvaya-jñānaṃ saṃvṛti-jñānaṃ paricaya-jñānaṃ yathāva[j]-jñānam	parijaya-saṃjñānam bhāvayitavyam\ saṃvṛti-saṃjñānam bhāvayitavyam\ yathāruta-saṃjñānam bhāvayitavyam\
以無所得而為方便，應修習有尋有伺三摩地、無尋唯伺三摩地、無尋無伺三摩地，三三摩地不可得故．	savitarkaḥ savicāraḥ samādhir avitarko 'vicāra-mātraḥ samādhiḥ avitarkaḥ [f. 9a] avicāraḥ samādhiḥ	savitarkaḥ savicāraḥ samādhir bhāvayitavyaḥ\ avitarko 'vicāra-mātraḥ samādhir bhāvayitavyaḥ\ avitarko 'vicāraḥ samādhir bhāvayitavyaḥ\
以無所得而為方便，應修習未知當知根、已知根、具知根，三無漏根不可得故．	anājñātam ājñāsyāmîtîndriyam ājñêndriyam ājñātāvīndriyam	anājñātam ājñāsyāmîndriyam bhāvayitavyam\ ājñêndriyam bhāvayitavyam\ ājñātāvīndriyam bhāvayitavyam\
以無所得而為方便，應修習不淨處觀		
	abhibhvāyatanaṃ	abhibhvāyatanam bhāvayitavyam\
遍滿處觀	kṛtsnâyatanaṃ	kṛtsnâyatanam

		bhāvayitavyam\
一切智智		sarvajña-jñānam bhāvayitavyam\
奢摩他，毘婆舍那		śamatha-vipaśyane bhāvayitavye
四攝事	catvāri saṃgraha-vastūni\	
四勝住	catvāri vyava/2/sthānāni\	
三明		tisro vidyā bhāvayitavyāḥ\
五眼		
		catasraḥ pratisaṃvido bhāvayitavyāḥ\ catvāri vaiśāradyāni bhāvayitavyāni\
六神通		acyutāḥ (p. 21) pañcâbhijñā bhāvayitavyāḥ\
六波羅蜜多		ṣaṭ-pāramitā bhāvayitavyāḥ\
七聖財		sapta-dhanāni bhāvayitavyāni\
八大士覺		aṣṭau mahā-puruṣa-vitarkā bhāvayitavyāḥ\
九有情居智，陀羅尼門，三摩地門		
十地	daśa-bhūmayor	
十行	daśa-caryā	
十忍	daśa-kṣāntayor	
二十增上意樂	viṃśatir-adhyāśayāḥ	
	sarva-jñānaṃ\ śamatha-vipaśyanā-jñāne\ tisro vidyā	
如來十力		daśa-tathāgata-balāni bhāvayitavyāni\

四無所畏，四無礙解	catasraḥ pratisaṃvidaḥ catvāri vaiśāradyāny	
	acyu/3/tāḥ paṃcâbhijñāḥ ṣaṭ-pāramitāḥ sapta-dhanāny aṣṭau mahā-puruṣa-vitarkā nava-satvâvāsā daśa-tathāgata-balāny	
十八佛不共法	aṣṭādaśâveṇikā buddha-dhrmā	aṣṭādaśâveṇikā buddha-dhrmā bhāvayitavyāḥ\
三十二大士相，八十隨好，無忘失法，恆住捨性，一切智，道相智，一切相智，一切相微妙智		
大慈	mahā-mai/4/trī	mahā-maitrī bhāvayitavyā\
大悲	mahā-karuṇā	mahā-karuṇā bhāvayitavyā\
大喜		mahā-muditā bhāvayitavyā\
大捨		mahôpekṣā bhāvayitavyā\\
及餘無量無邊佛法，如是諸法不可得故．	sarvâkāra-varôpêtaṃ	

APPENDIX 4

Entering into Nirvāṇa through the Three Yānas

復有菩薩摩訶薩修行六種波羅蜜多，成就大士三十二相，諸根猛利，清淨端嚴，眾生見者無不愛敬，因斯勸導應其根欲，令漸證得三乘涅槃．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 20a.)

There are Bodhisattvas who, coursing in the six perfections, their bodies adorned with the 32 marks of the Superman, become endowed with the most excellent perfectly pure organs, and who therefore become dear and pleasant to the manyfolk. And the beings who see those Bodhisattvas, do, through just that serene faith in their hearts, gradually attain full Nirvana through the three vehicles. (LSPW, pp. 72-73.)

常生天人、受諸富樂，隨心所願，乘三乘法，而趣涅槃．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 162c.)

But, having experienced the achievements open to gods and men they enter Nirvana in accordance with their original vow, i.e. through the vehicle of the Disciples, or that of the Pratyekabuddhas, or the great vehicle. (LSPW, p. 251.)

此中有情漸次修學三乘正行，隨其所願，乃至速證三乘涅槃．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 163b.)

and all those beings will gradually move towards Parinirvana. (LSPW, p. 252.)

後隨所應，依三乘法，漸次修學而趣出離，或有證得聲聞涅槃、或有證得獨覺涅槃、或有證得無上涅槃究竟安樂．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, pp. 213a-214a.)

and gradually they will go forth by one of the three vehicles, i.e. the Disciple-vehicle, the Pratyekabuddha-vehicle, or the great vehicle. (LSPW, p. 328.)

是諸有情勤修善法，依三乘道，漸次證得三乘涅槃．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 340a.)

是諸有情得成佛已，復用佛樹諸葉花果饒益有情，令諸有情脫惡趣苦、得人天樂，漸次安立令入三乘般涅槃界，謂聲聞乘般涅槃界、或獨覺乘般涅槃界、或無上乘般涅槃界．(*T.* 220(1), vol. 6, p. 874a-b.)

And those who give them donations, they all will gradually reach the final Nirvana through the three vehicles, i.e. by the vehicle of the Disciples, the vehicle of the Pratyekabuddhas, or the great vehicle they will win full enlightenment. (LSPW, p. 525.)

漸依三乘而趣圓寂，謂令趣證聲聞、獨覺、及無上乘般涅槃界．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 372b.)

and in due course they will, by means of the three vehicles, enter into the realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind. (LSPW, p. 575.)

漸依三乘盡苦邊際，證涅槃界，究竟安樂．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 373a.)

and will gradually, with the help of the three kinds of miracles (or more likely, the three

vehicles), make an end of ill. (LSPW, p. 577.)

值遇如來應正等覺，聞說正法，如實修行，漸依三乘而趣圓寂，謂隨證入無上大乘、獨覺、聲聞般涅槃界．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 373a-b.)

Gradually they are nirvanized in the realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind and that through the three vehicles, i.e. the Disciple-vehicle, the Pratyekabuddha-vehicle, or the great vehicle. (LSPW, p. 577.)

聖法果者，謂佛無上正等菩提大涅槃界．(The fruit of the holy dharmas is the realm of the great Nirvāṇa of the Buddha's unsurpassed perfect enlightenment.) (*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 374b.)

汝等安住律儀戒已，漸次當能作苦邊際，依三乘法，隨其所應，出離生死，至究竟樂．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 407b.)

and in consequence you will, having stood in moral restraint, gradually put an end to ill through the three vehicles, i.e. the vehicle of the Disciples, the vehicle of the Pratyekabuddhas, and the cognition of the knowledge of all modes. (LSPW, p. 612.)

諸有情類由斯展轉漸依三乘而得解脫．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 407c.)

he leads them step by step to final Nirvana through the three vehicles. (LSPW, pp. 612-613.)

隨其所應，得三乘果．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 408a.)

彼由如是無分別故，隨其所應，漸次證得三乘涅槃，究竟安樂．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 408b.)

諸菩薩摩訶薩修行布施波羅蜜多，方便善巧，成熟有情，令其解脫惡趣生死，如應證得三乘涅槃，饒益自他，究竟安樂．(*T.* 220(2), vol. 7, p. 409a-b.)

and as a result will gradually reach final Nirvana through the three vehicles. (LSPW, p. 613.)

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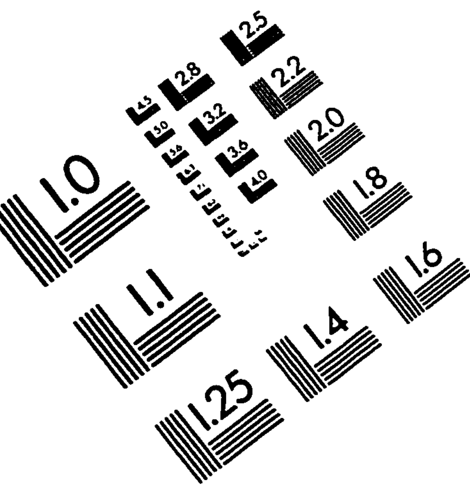
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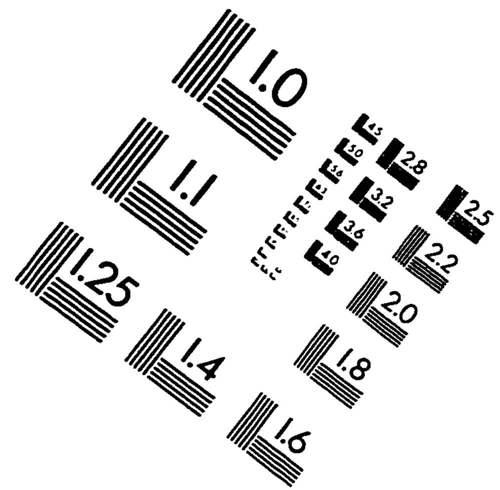
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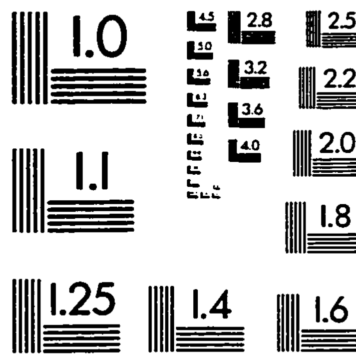
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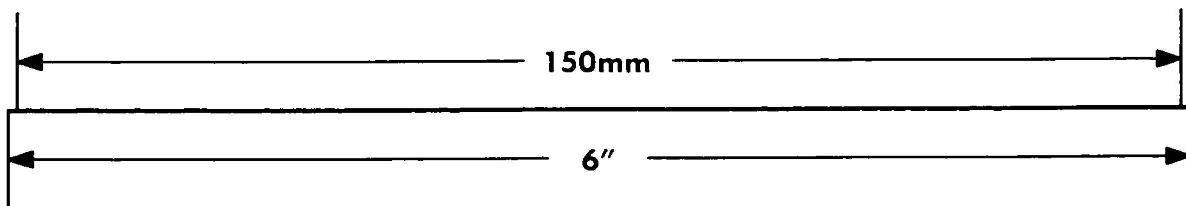
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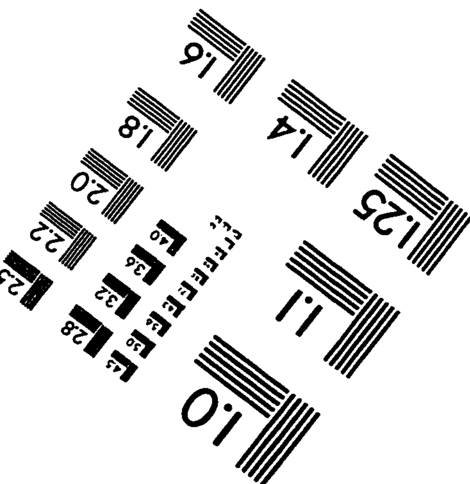
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